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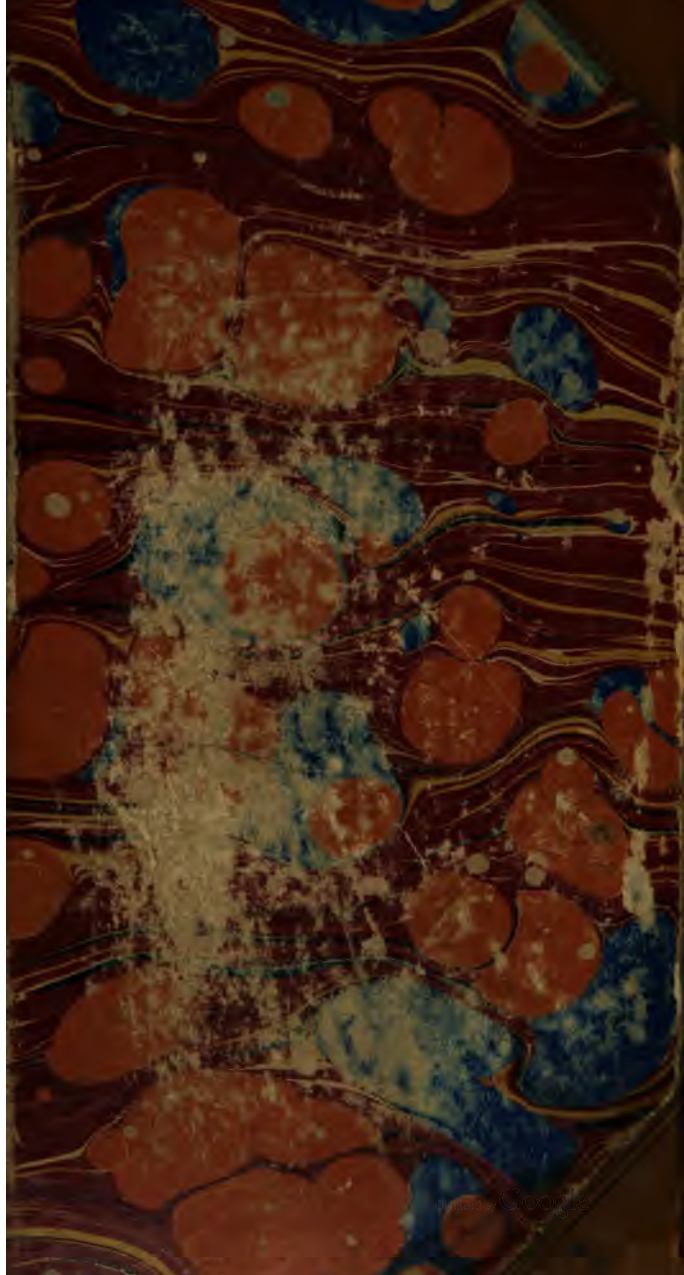
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A
MONTH IN TOWN ;

A Satirical Novel.

BY

HUMPHREY HEDGEHOG, Esq.

AUTHOR OF

"THE GENERAL-POST BAG," "REJECTED ODES,"
&c. &c. &c.

"VELUTI IN SPECULUM."

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOLUME I.

THIRD EDITION, CORRECTED,
WITH NEW PREFACE, &c.

LONDON:
PRINTED FOR J. JOHNSTON, CHEAPSIDE.

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PREFACE

TO

THE THIRD EDITION.

SINCE the appearance of the first impression of this novel, many and curious have been the events which have occurred in the Fever-isle, to some of which it may not be very inappropriate to refer, by way of a supplementary preface. Soon after the departure of the great lords, controllers, &c. driven to madness by the persecutions of Narcissus and Puggilla, Germania adopted

VOL. I.

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the resolution of quitting a land which had only been productive to her of disquietude and misery. She was accompanied by two or three faithful domestics, who, amidst all her sufferings, remained true to her fortunes. Eildown, Blenkinson, and Calderagh, hugged themselves upon the success of their schemes, and exerted every method to throw obstacles in the way of her return ; and, by increasing her disgust towards Fever-isle, to render her more contented with a foreign home. Lady Charlotte was placed under most severe restraints ; all her old domestics and friends being dismissed from about her person, lest they might aid her in planning designs to thwart the

arbitrary intentions of her father and grandmother; and replaced by persons who were either too much devoted to the interests of Narcissus and Puggilla, to promote the wishes of Lady Charlotte, by laxity of conduct on their part, or upon whom the fear of offending such distinguished personages, operated so strongly as to preclude the probability of any treachery. Wherever she moved she was subjected to the vigilance of these inveterate inquisitors, who hovered about her steps, and reported to their employers every movement of their young mistress. In the midst of these domestic disquietudes, Narcissus and his illustrious friends, who had so recently visited him, were plunged into a

new war with the adjacent country, which had so long been a bone of contention, since the log which they had set up over its inhabitants had been kicked down, and it was presumed to be necessary, for the general safety and welfare, that it should be replaced. This business, however, was brought to a more speedy conclusion than was expected ; the stork was driven away, and the log re-established over the Frog-land : and the Frog nation, although they croaked and cried out most lamentably, being, truth to tell, half worn away by famine and destruction, were treated with most unceremonious severity by all parties. After this issue, Narcissus, in the sullenness of his pride and self-con-

sequence, determined to visit the towns and villages of the Fever-isle, nothing doubting that he should receive most unbounded applauses from all ranks and descriptions of people for the wisdom and energy which he presumed himself to have displayed! But, alas, what was his sorrow, anger, and mortification, to meet with nothing but hisses and groans, and such-like very unequivocal testimonies of dislike; and when he came to a certain place yeloped *Ashes de la Pouch*, how did Narcissus tremble and swear to find the road intercepted with timber trees, which had been dragged across it for the evident purpose of overturning the carriage in which his sacred person

was conveyed. It is true, the great designs of the planners of this notable experiment were frustrated by the activity of the drivers of the vehicle, who saved their master's most illustrious neck, and thereby did most assuredly lay claim to the eternal gratitude of the inhabitants of the Fever-isle ; and, indeed, it is currently reported that when the deputies of the island shall assemble together, after the festival season has passed away, that a pillar will be ordered to be erected, at the principal entrance into the great city, with the circumstance chiselled on its base, and an indelible description to the renown of that most glorious pair of postilions who, at mid-

night, saw the danger, and were endued with singular loyalty to avert from their most *amiable* master the gloomy consequences which might have ensued.

This is a brief epitome of the principal features of the events which have recently occurred. But there are other matters of great national importance relating to the mighty mother of stars, Puggilla, and to a dazzling brother of Narcissus, which involve consequences which cannot be contemplated within the brief compass of a prefatory chapter. I have duly weighed these matters, and find them worthy of more enlarged notice : they are not of the class of everyday occurrences which flit along the

stream of time, and leave no track by which they can be followed after the moment. The matters to which I allude, do afford one more very powerful illustration of the amiable and enviable *concord* which reigns in the first family of the *Fever-isle*; and shew how natural it is to expect, from such bright examples as are there daily and hourly set before the people, that "unanimity, peace," and harmony will diffuse themselves most rapidly through all classes of the community, and bind the whole of the island in one sweet chain of domestic affection. They ought therefore to be held up to universal view; and this being the impression upon my mind, I have determined, God willing, and with the aid

of those faculties which have heretofore very faithfully obeyed my calls, to publish forthwith a new work, which will very quickly follow this third edition, and which I do much earnestly recommend to the close perusal of all politicians, logicians, mathematicians, astronomers, astrologers, metaphysicians, geographers, orators, philosophers, divines, lawyers, physicians, poets, legislators, peers, peeresses, and so forth, even down to the commonalty, which inhabit all the niches, creeks, corners, hills, woods, vallies, isthmuses, islands, and peninsulas, which fall under the dominion of the Fever-isle: gravely and soberly assuring them that the facts, and statements, and averments, contained in

the three volumes which are forthwith to be ushered into the world, are well worthy of immediate attention, inasmuch as they will open political *arcana* which might otherwise have remained for ever closed and sealed against the public eye; and inasmuch, also, as they will relate certain anecdotes of undoubted authenticity, which will make all men wonder and smile if they are true protestants, and if they are orthodox catholics, cross themselves, and utter a dozen or two *Ave Marias*; which will touch princes, lords, and controllers, to the quick; and they will be (Heaven speeding them) translated into all tongues, Christian and Pagan, and read by fathers to their sons, and mothers to their daughters, for time

out of calculation, and notwithstanding the steady efforts which those whom it may concern, and sting and goad, and so forth, may and will unquestionably make to stifle in its birth, this new bantling, the legitimate offspring of Truth and Independence, in due time, to be christened

1815.

Eighteen Hundred & the Devil

A MONTH IN TOWN.

PREFATORY CHAPTER.

"THEY might have been here yesterday," said Narcissus, looking down on the ground, and then casting a hasty glance at the temporary edifices which bestrewed the park on every side.—

"Here, have I not squandered away thousands of pounds which I had no right to waste, in order to make a sumptuous appearance? And, after all, the journey is protracted; some new obstacles have arisen, and it is possible another day may be so hazy that we cannot distinguish, in telegraphic signs, a B

B

from a bull's foot, and cannot consequently receive any notice of their coming, nor get the coaches, nor the guards, nor the guns, ready to do them honour! My conscience, after all, hits me hard at the sight of all these splendid preparations made with the money which has been entrusted to me, and suggests how preferable it would have been to have enlivened with it the oppressed brow of industry, and to have illumined with rapture the cot of care. But am not I a great man, with power and wealth at my command, and why should I trouble myself about conscience and the happiness of others? I will seek my own gratification; I will have fairs, and puppet-shows, and booths, and races, and sea-fights, and fiddlers, and pipers, and ale-houses, and balloons, and fire-works, and rockets, and bombardments, and dancing, and every

other sort of twirligig which can make my name glorious ; and I will make my park and myself immortal—d—n me, but I will ; and all the world shall adore my magnificence and spirit—d—n me, but they shall.”

He had proceeded thus far, when his foot struck the stump of a tree, and interrupted the course of his reflections.—The trivial accident ruffled the temper of Narcissus, who, accustomed to the unbounded gratification of every desire, was ill prepared to receive any thing like a check with temper or patience.—Narcissus was the eldest son and heir of an illustrious man, and was born to hereditary power ; nature had been equally bountiful to the father and the son, for she had bestowed upon both tolerable persons, and a disposition to enjoy the wealth which they possessed. The

sire was a worthy old gentleman, who, for above fifty years, had performed his duties as a husband, a father and a master, with the most conscientious uniformity. He set a good example to all beneath him, and even his enemies (for enemies a good man may meet with) were constrained to show him respectful reverence. For some years past, however, he had unfortunately been afflicted with a malady which rendered it impossible for him to attend to the management of his own concerns, and of those which had been entrusted to his care; and as, previous to this unfortunate period, he had committed his affairs to servants who were obnoxious to his tenants, great hopes were entertained, on the assumption of the controul which his father could no longer possess, that the son would remove every grievance, and place matters upon a more comfortable

basis. The tenants were justified in anticipating such a reformation, as Narcissus had always been loud in the expression of his hatred of these confidential servants of his father, who, he made no scruple to declare, had, in many instances, compounded the real welfare of the tenants for their own private advantage. Some time before this, Narcissus had married a foreign lady, of beauty and fortune, whom his father had selected for the double purpose of fixing the fluctuating affections of his son, and of extricating him from the pecuniary difficulties into which his ardent pursuit of pleasure had led him. For a few months, in the new character of a husband, he acquitted himself tolerably well ; but, immediately after the birth of a daughter, he changed his behaviour, withdrew his confidence from his wife, discarded her from his bed and his house,

and, when he was called upon to take the place of his afflicted father, she, who ought to have shared the honour of his new situation with him, was compelled to live in obscurity, subjected to accusations which could not be established, and deeply wounded in her fame and in her feelings. Her daughter, too, had been separated from her, and placed under the management of strangers; and even the natural intercourse between parent and child was abridged and placed under the most forbidden restrictions. It was at this period of his life, after Narcissus had for three years dispensed the power of his father, that the conclusion of a long and sanguinary quarrel with a neighbouring manor was about to be celebrated by the visits to Narcissus of several foreign strangers of great note, who had been his friends throughout the contest; and it was to this circumstance

that the soliloquy, with which this chapter opens, is supposed to refer.

Great minds are as likely to be discomposed by minute occurrences as minds of a less refined and less illustrious structure and organization ; although the effect may and will vary in importance according to the power and the situation in life of the individual. Such was the influence produced upon the mind of Narcissus by the contusion of his toe, that, had the life of a human being, at that moment, depended on his fiat, without being a second Lavater, a superficial observer might have read the sentence of death legibly written in his countenance. In the ingredients of his character, mercy was by no means predominant ; and now the little which might have belonged to him was so withered and scorched up by the heat of passion, that it shewed no symptom of life.

Just at this instant, Mahony rushed down the garden walk, evidently disordered with some delightful agitation of mind which produced a correspondent convulsion. "O Sir," cried the faithful fellow, (who was the private secretary of Narcissus,) breathless with impatience to set his words at liberty—"O Sir! Sir! Sir! the Telegraph! the Telegraph! the Telegraph! They are come! they are come!"

The effect was instantaneous: it appeared as though Narcissus was this day doomed to become the shuttlecock of the most sudden and opposite emotions. A smile lighted up his countenance: the sentence of death would have been reversed. "Indeed!" said he; "thanks, my dear Mahony; now then we will give them a specimen of my power and riches, eh?" And, as he concluded, he squeezed the hand of Maho-

ny with all the fervency of grateful friendship. And Mahony was entitled to something of this description, for he had waded through much filth and dirt to please his master, and had been true to all his wishes for a series of years; straining himself to the utmost, to the great detriment of his own comfort and character, to promote all the gratifications of Narcissus; and ultimately raising himself, by means of his persevering assiduity, to the rank of a private confidant and a right honourable *factotum*.

“ Oh, yes, Sir !” replied Mahony, rubbing his hands with the most evident ecstasy—“ Yes, Sir, we will show them things which shall astonish them; and if you would take my advice, Sir——.”

“ Your advice, Sir ! Well, and what is your advice, pray ?” returned Narcissus,

“By the Lord, Sir,” answered Mahony, “but I would make a point of collecting all the wealth I could possibly come at, to set before them, on purpose to awe them into admiration. I would borrow all my father’s plate, and he has got a good share; and I would get my mother to lend me her diamonds, which you know, Sir, may very well be estimated at the value of two or three millions; and which, it is very well known, have not seen day-light these four or five years, and are consequently little better than so much useless lumber; and I would borrow all the plate of the gentleman who is a kind of perpetual president of a certain great club which meets every evening, during a certain portion of the year, for the dispatch of business; and, as this gentleman has the good fortune to receive services of plate pretty often, as a sort of *bonus* for his good manage-

ment, he must have accumulated a tolerable quantity. I would not do anything by halves, Sir; but by heaven and earth, I would send them home amazed and confounded."

"A good thought, Mahony," cried Narcissus, shaking hands with his loquacious Secretary—"a very excellent thought, my dear fellow, and I *will* send them home amazed and confounded. But, hark ye, come here and give me your opinion of my new dome, and my temporary fête rooms. Don't you think the idea is perfectly *nouvelle*? And as for the model and the workmanship—*écod*, they are—but tell me, what do *you* think of the model and the workmanship? Come, Mahony, I know you have a taste for these things."

"Exquisite, Sir; most magnificent.

Solomon's temple was a fool to it. The world will call you Solomon the second, and will reckon this its eighth wonder. But pray, Sir, will you have the goodness to inform me what is the form of that dome? I don't think it is *triangular*, nor *quadrangular*, nor *quintagonal*, nor *sexagonal*, nor any other *agonal* or *angular* that I ever learned from Bonny-castle."

"Why," said Narcissus, "that dome is neither the one nor the other; it is a figure entirely of my own invention. D—me, Mahony, would you believe, I have had no sleep for a month, so much have my thoughts been occupied in the invention of the *polyangular* piece of building: it surpasses all Bonny-castle's shapes and figures as far as a triangle does a straight line. It is indeed hitherto *nameless*, because it is hitherto

unknown, and I have some thoughts of calling it *royal* or *regency*! Eh! Mahony! don't you think that a good idea?"

"Sublime! Astonishing! Ingenious in the extreme!" exclaimed the enraptured Secretary. "Well, sir, I always had a wonderful idea of your godlike taste, ever since you sent away your wife, and took to your arms that dear, bewitching, charming handful of beauty which now graces your illustrious pillow."

"Well, Mahony, then come this way," said Narcissus, "and I will still more astonish you." So saying, he led the Secretary through all the long labyrinth of unfinished buildings which were scattered all over his parks and his gardens, among Chinese pagodas, and skeletons

of temples, and embryo bridges, and banqueting rooms, and ball rooms, and a long list of *et cetera* ; and at every step he paused to look on Mahony's face, and read the extent of his astonishment and delight. And Mahony was too much of a courtier to let his master look in vain :—" Gods ! Heaven ! Magic ! Fairy Land ! Enchantment !" and a hundred other well-adapted words rushed from his tongue, as soon as his judgment gave the signal ; and his master's delight rose in an equal proportion with the growing amazement of his confident.— For great men are composed of exactly the same materials as little men ; they have, in truth, the same description of passions, and obey the same vicissitudes of pleasure and its opposite. They love to astonish their fellow creatures, and to attract the applauses of a giddy world, as much as a mountebank on a stage is de-

sirous to collect a credulous and gaping mob to reward him for making fools of them.

“ I never read of such preparations !” cried Mahony, “ and yet I have perused *Fairy Tales*, and *Arabian Nights*, and *Oriental Novels*, and two or three more books of the same sort, but they none of them come up to this. Zounds ! what a fête this will be ! What with your wisdom, Sir, and what with your splendor, the world will never leave off admiring you, that is certain ! There is but one thing wanting, Sir !”

“ One thing wanting, eh,” impatiently cried Narcissus, who could not bear the idea that his splendid preparations should be in any degree imperfect ;—“ and what is that thing, eh ? Tell me, Mahony !”

“ Why, Sir, the fête will be the most splendid thing that ever was invented to those who may be happy enough to live in these times. But the thing is, Sir, to make it as grand and imposing to those who may live in after times; and you will certainly stand in need of a most able, and attentive, and spirited, writer, to hand down the description, in proper terms, to posterity. For you must be aware, Sir, that half your gratification will be lost, if the admiration of mankind should not be extended beyond the present generation. Lord, Sir, I would have your fêtes and festivals talked of in Heaven, when there are none left in the world to talk about them. What do you think of the Reverend Baronet Editor? If he has any gratitude, he should undertake the task gratuitously.”

“ He may have gratitude enough.”

replied Narcissus, "but he wants talent. He does very well for a daily retailer of my praise ; he fills very respectably the honourable office of common flatterer ; and deals out his lies with a good deal of ease and *sang-froid* ; and he can bear a buffeting with as good a grace as any man ; and hunt down a slander keenly enough ; and he can magnify my common-place exploits into most wonderful specimens of magnanimity or magnificence. All these things he can do with a good grace ; but I do not much think he has capability to give a suitable description of my splendid doings ; for, d'ye hear, Mahony, I mean to have a grand carnival in my park ; but of this you'll say nothing at present ; and I mean to have such feasting and such enjoyments of every description within my walls as can scarcely be imagined ; and all these things will require

a good warm writer. I don't know that my Poet can do it well enough, yet I think I should like it best in poetry, if I could get it dressed in a sweet, flowing, harmonious uniform. D'ye think of any other person ?”

Mahony was puzzled with the question ; but after a moment's alleviation of the titillating sensation excited in his head by the agitation of his brain, he replied, “ Why, Sir, what d'ye think of the bard who translated the Grecian odes, which pleased us all so much, and who writes so very prettily on the subject of love and enjoyment ? If you mean, Sir, to have any amorous sports mingled amongst the pleasures, he will hit them off most admirably. ”

“ Aye,” said Narcissus, “ he would do well ; but I have disoblighd him, and

therefore, notwithstanding my rank and purse, and so forth, I'll be sworn he would feel no pleasure in obliging me. Think of another."

"The bard would do admirably well who was accustomed to write so much and so wittily against courts and kings, but that I fear he is grown too old, and that the fire of his genius is too nearly extinguished. I know of no other, Sir; but, if you will copy the plan of the managers of a certain great theatre, and advertize for poems on the subject, with the promise of good rewards to the first and second best productions, I'll be bound for it you will get as many specimens as it would take you at least a month to peruse, and you then can appoint two or three competent judges to determine which of the candidates shall have best established his claim to the prize."

“Very well thought of,” returned Narcissus; “though, by the way, there may be as much difficulty in finding out judges as poets; but, however, we will try the plan; so draw up an advertisement, and send it to the Baronet. And now, Mahony, is every thing prepared for the conveyance of our guests? Have you got plenty of horses on the road, to show that we are not deficient in means? Have you got our guns stationed upon the hills, to convince them that we mean to show them respect?—Have you sent off my beautiful state-horses and coach to convey them?”

“Every thing is done, Sir,” answered Mahony, “and the streets and roads are lined with such a crowd as to render them almost impassable. I suppose they expect to see beings entirely out of the common routine of mortals—bears’ heads, fishes’ tails, lions’ claws, and no-

thing human about them but their bodies."

"Humph!" said Narcissus; "but there is another point on which I would fain take thy advice, Mahony; and it is one which nearly affects me. These visitors must not see my *wife*—that would be the devil!"

"Leave that to me, Sir," replied the confident; "I'll raise such a cloud before their eyes, that they shall only be able to go where we would have them. Give yourself no farther uneasiness on that subject."

"And my daughter, too, they *must* call upon her; and, should she show off any of her tricks before them, I shall never be able to bear it. And she has gained some very strange notions lately,

and seems absolutely bent upon showing me that she does not care a single rush whether I am pleased or displeased. Oh! Mahony, the hussy causes me a great deal of uneasiness; I am for ever racking my brain to know what to do with her, and where to put her out of harm's way."

"As to your daughter, Sir, I must beg you will excuse me from any interference," replied Mahony. "No, by the Lord, although I would do any thing I dare to serve you and promote your wishes, I would sooner have to encounter a conclave of passionate judges than expose myself to the fury of that untamed daughter of yours. Why, Sir, she would make no more hesitation at scratching out my eyes than I should about sitting me down to my dinner! Only remember how she behaved to one

friend of yours, who chanced to thwart her disposition a little. For God's sake, Sir, send me on any other service than this; but here pray excuse me."

Mahony's convulsed frame, his fixed eye, the paleness of his countenance, the unusual bristling up of his locks, the clenching of his hands, and a thousand other indications of uncommon agitation, plainly evinced the terror he felt, under the impression that he might be pressed into such a dangerous employment.—

His master, however, felt in no way disposed to put his fortitude to so severe a trial; and Mahony felt no small relief when Narcissus replied, "Well, then, since you are so unwilling to intermeddle between me and my daughter, even let things take their chance, and I will select for you a less hateful office. Here is a petition I have just received from

Miss Venom, an old musty maid of distinction, belonging to my mother, who, because she has heard that one of my visitors is rather attached to the fair sex, begins, forsooth, to cry out that her virtue is in danger, unless she is allowed to remove to another residence! Her virtue! The virtue of a worn-out old Abigail, who, I'd be sworn, at the age of fifty-nine would give all her remaining teeth for a frolic, could she accomplish her wishes without alarming any Argus! Yet she must petition, to keep the world in the dark!"

"Laughable enough, Sir," exclaimed Mahony, who by this time had sufficiently recovered his gaiety to join very heartily in the laugh with his master.—
"And so, Sir, she wished to be put out of the way of temptation, and prays you to deliver her from evil, and you mean to——"

"Indulge her in her fancy," interrupted Narcissus, "and that will be as severe a punishment as I can devise for her mock modesty ; and when she finds that I have granted her hypocritical request, she will most sincerely devote me to the devil, and wish herself hanged for being such a fool as to ask it."

"And," replied Mahony, hammering and stammering, "you wish me to——."

"To convey to the silly fool my gracious permission that she may cut her own throat for letting her prudishness stand in the way of her real inclinations. But of this writer, Mahony ;—I must confess I feel some ambition to have my splendor well recorded, either in poetry or verse ; I am not particular, so it reads well."

Mahony scratched his head a second time. Narcissus looked wise, which was rather unusual, and had it been witnessed by more than one of his companions, it would have spread a just alarm throughout the whole court. At length the happy Secretary, starting suddenly from his trance, gave a bound of some eighteen feet high, and ejaculated, as he alighted within an inch of his master's toes, "Ecce, Sir, I have it!—employ HUMPHREY HEDGEHOG, Esq. Though he has been a little ill-tempered, you know very well how to turn his tone.—Money—money—money—Sir, is the grand conciliator. And it will be only just adding a few thousands to the estimate of the Board of Works, and Humphrey will hit you the same thing off, in as many different forms as you pleas."

Narcissus coincided, and Mahony was

immediately empowered to strike the bargain ; receiving, at the same time, very strict orders to command Humphrey to avoid any expression which might be construed into an insult to kings or princes, or any other branches of the blood royal, except the wife of Narcissus, who although dashed with a little of that blood, was to be considered as entirely out of the meaning of Narcissus's intention. " And, Mahony," said Narcissus, " take care to warn him against exposing little harmless vices, which are really laudable in great men ; and tell him, when he mentions my name to add a few distinguishing and flattering epithets—such—as—but let him read the Baronet's daily production for a model !"

" I will take great care," said Mahony ; " and be assured, Sir, every thing shall be accommodated to your wish."

"You are good, Mahony," Narcissus answered, squeezing him by the hand, "you are a very faithful, discerning, and intelligent fellow ; and I mean to give you a still higher dignity in my house, bye and bye. Services like yours deserve the most unbounded recompence. Run, good Mahony, fetch me my whiskers !"

Fleet as Mercury, away footed Mahony, and, having executed for his gracious master the personal services he required at the moment, he instantly went off in search of Humphrey ; and having, with some difficulty, discovered his attic, lost no time in retaining the happy scribbler in the sacred cause of royalty.

CHAPTER I.

The Author treateth upon the greatness of his subject, and sheweth how illustrious beings are privileged by Heaven. He taketh a retrospect—Describeth the situation of Fever-isle—Expected visitors—Valour of Claywrench—Wife of Narcissus—His indifference to the opinion of his vassals—Arrival of the Controller of Freezegaul and the Lord of Brushall.

HE who is employed to write on illustrious subjects may account himself a most happy and highly favoured individual, since the difference between mighty and mean topics is like that between diamonds of the first water and

diamond dross. Put the former into the hands of the lapidary, and, however awkwardly he may work, the beauty of the material will reflect credit upon his endeavours; but let him be the most skilful of his trade, and he will never make the dross into diamonds. And the reason why great subjects are to be considered thus highly of, is not merely because of their rank and brilliance, extrinsically speaking; but it is also on this account, that the greatest of all persons are always most wise, most virtuous, and most good beings; for that which is very vile in a meaner being, alters its nature when it rises to the top of society, and in the very highest degree becomes that which is most honourable. And this, by the way, is one of the most admirable ordinations of Providence, since the order of society could never be preserved, nor the due distinction of ranks,

nor the equilibrium of the universe, if the privilege were allowed to the scum of creation to pick holes in the qualifications of the very choicest of its works. For an example, we will take Kings and Queens, and their illustrious progenies: how useful is the court and constitutional maxim of the most enlightened countries, that *Kings can do no wrong*; the principle is somewhat of a piece with the infallibility of the Pope; and hath such a wide latitude, that it neutralizes all the properties of sin, and completely changes all the system of right and wrong. Almighty God hath condescendingly inserted a clause of exemption for these very high orders of people in all his statutes against wickedness, and hath thus kindly weighed crime, not according to its operation on the moral economy of the world, but by the rank and quality of him who,

commits it: *ergo*, kings and regents, and such like meteors of mankind, may sin how, when, and where they please, and who the devil dares to find fault with them for it? Let the Baronet oracle of Narcissus produce a better argument to excuse the eccentric absurdities of his master if he can!

We might carry the principle a great deal further were it necessary for our purpose, but we have not the slightest desire to take any unnecessary labour upon ourselves. We have established it sufficiently that the greatest of men are the most greatly privileged by Heaven, who hath given them passions as warm and unruly as any other beings are possessed of, with an unbounded latitude for their indulgence, and, at the same time, hath exempted them from all moral and religious responsibility;

and having done all this, we certainly have strictly fulfilled the injunctions which Narcissus conveyed to us through his organ, Mahony.

The castle in which Narcissus resides is surrounded by the dwellings of his father's vassals, for the old gentleman is the lord of a most extensive manor, which is surrounded on all sides by a very wide and deep ditch. For many years his lordship has employed his people in manufacturing vessels of various descriptions, made out of the best sort of timber which grows on the manor, with which he has filled this ditch, and in the manœuvring of which, the vassals have become so very expert, that none of the neighbouring lords can approach his shores without his special permission. Some who have had the temerity to fit out vessels to destroy his,

have been compelled to acknowledge the superior skill and bravery of the vassals of the *Fever-isle*, so called, it is said, from the fickleness of its atmosphere, which causes a regular importation of fevers and other disorders. The reader will have gathered from the introductory chapter, if he hath deigned to read it, that the old lord was so ill, (to the great sorrow of his vassals, who, in truth, loved him much,) as to be obliged to surrender the management of the manor into the hands of his friends, and they gave it to Narcissus as being the next heir-at-law. Great hopes had been entertained by the vassals that, when Narcissus should come into power, he would make some alterations in the establishment at the different castles of his father, and would correct some little abuses which had crept into the management, in consequence of the old lord's

ill state of health for some years previous ; and indeed, the bailiff and a few of the chief vassals, who had always been consulted by my lord on every occasion, were so much afraid lest their conduct should be looked into, that they tied down Narcissus to act upon their advice, as his father had done, for the first twelve months after he should be invested with the supreme management. This restraint enraged Narcissus prodigiously at the time, but he was compelled to comply ; nevertheless, at the expiration of these twelve months, his anger had so completely passed away, that to the great disappointment and astonishment of the vassals, he continued these persons in his confidence, and broke the solemn pledge which he had given to all the friends and companions of his early days, some of whom had materially injured their private fortunes to extri-

cate him from the juvenile difficulties into which his follies had so frequently plunged him, under the impression, and with the rational expectation, that, whenever the power should be vested in his hands, the inclination to repay debts of gratitude would not be wanted. Some of the vassals have even gone so far as to say that a compact was entered into between Narcissus and his new friends, by which the latter undertook to leave him at full liberty to pursue his own pleasures, and to find him in means, provided they were left to the uncontrolled management of the manor; in consequence of which the vassals were called upon to contribute fresh sums every day to provide for the pleasures of the deputy-lord and his counsellors. The castle was a continual scene of excess and splendor; and, totally regardless of the old lord's lamentable situation, Nar-

cissus and his mother were continually giving dinners and dances to the principal of the vassals and their wives and families. Narcissus, also, finding himself less restrained than usual, increased the circle of his private enjoyments, and gained new mistresses, and toyed and played away the hours which his father had been accustomed to devote to business. Indeed, as some of the principal people have been heard to say, in the words of Shakespear—

“ The Court

“ Show'd like a riotous inn ; epicurism and lust

“ Made it more like a tavern or a brothel

“ Than a grac'd palace.”

This was the state of affairs at the time when the lords of two other manors, who had been assisting the lord of Feverisle to overthrow an usurper of a neighbouring estate, expressed their intention

to pay a visit to Narcissus, if they could manage to get across the ditch ; for notwithstanding they were very great and very powerful lords, they had not so much as a cockle-shell which they durst launch without permission of the mistress of the ditch, as Fever-isle was called. Narcissus immediately dispatched one of his brothers, who was the commander of the vessels, with sufficient number to bring over the Controller of Freezegaul and the Lord of Brushball, and all the vassals whom they might choose to bring with them. This mighty commander, however, who was called Claywrench, notwithstanding he had for some years been appointed to command the vessels of the Fever-isle, had scarcely ever ventured upon the ditch, but had executed all his work by deputy, as was the general custom in the island, when persons were either too indolent or too

proud to do the duty themselves. Not that Claywrench was either too indolent or too proud, but whether or not he had a spice in his composition of a certain quality called *cowardice*, which prevented him from defending the rights of the ditch *in propria personá*, hath never been ascertained. This commander, however, determined not to bring over the two great lords by deputy ; he therefore went on board a splendid vessel, which had been prepared purposely for his reception, and sailed to the other side of the ditch to wait the arrival of the expected visitors.

The vassals at home, meanwhile, being pretty merry, blunt, and well-conceited sort of persons, by way of whiling away the hours until these lords should come, (for by the way the expectation of them had completely taken away all ap-

petite for labour,) began to joke and to crack their witticisms upon the valour of Claywrench, who thus boldly adventured out on the ditch, in spite of foes and tempests. That he had courage none doubted, who considered for a moment that he had for many-years lived with a lady, who, as report says, used to reduce him to obedience, when he was disposed to run rusty, by the unconquerable argument of the poker or the hearth-brush; and, by means of these powerful figures of rhetoric, absolutely contrived, with some difficulty, to render him a decent member of society. Some might have been fearful to raise a poker or a brush against such an illustrious head, yet, on consideration, it appears but reasonable that she who allowed him the free use of her person, should, in return, be granted a retaliatory privilege. Be this as it may, however, he had the intrepidity to

bear all her buffetings of tongue, or whatever other instrument she might resort to, for a series of years, therefore it was not to be disputed that he had courage.

Some of the vassals urged that lordly heads were very precious things, and ought to be taken especial care of, and not to be trusted to the indiscriminating impudence of storms, which would not rage a whit the less fiercely, because the brother of the deputy-lord was exposed to them; while others very loudly asserted, that however valuable lordly heads might be accounted in some manors, where they were of a better sort, those of Fever-isle were such uncommon awkward, thick, and brainless bullheads, that if they did lose a few of them the manor would be none the worse for the loss; and this appeared to be the very general

opinion. Therefore no great objections were made to the voyage of Claywrench, on the score of any possible danger which might befall him.

The name of Narcissus also was treated rather unceremoniously about this time by the vassals, since he had very unwisely desired his mother to forbid his wife from coming to a public party which she was about to give, as he was determined never to meet her again—The vassals were very angry with this, as the wife of Narcissus, who was called Germania, had never been convicted of any offence against her husband, and was supposed only to have been put away and persecuted through the influence of a set of base and interested companions of Narcissus. The vassals were very loud in their complaints of the injuries and insults heaped upon Germania;

and, whenever Narcissus ventured to appear abroad, he was received with hisses and other tokens of disapprobation.— On being consoled by Mahony one day, after escaping from a scene of this description, Narcissus exclaimed, “Think not a moment about it, Mahony ; ’tis the only way in which *geese* can express their applause.” Thus lightly did the discontent and the murmurings of the vassals sit on the mind of Narcissus, and thus reckless was he of public opinion.

The announcement of the arrival of the strangers diverted the attention of the vassals from Narcissus. The road all the way from the ditch to the castle was lined with the inhabitants of the manor, prepared to give a welcome to the new visitors ; from hour to hour, from morn to night, they waited patiently, until it was communicated to them that

the two great lords had arrived at the castle, having wrapped themselves up in thick great coats, and otherwise disguised themselves for the purpose of escaping notice. This hoax very much angered the vassals, at first; for there is not a manor upon earth, where the inhabitants are so little disposed to overlook or to forgive any improper slight upon themselves, having a very high opinion of their own rights and importance.— They have also an uncommon antipathy to *hoaxings*, where themselves are the subjects, and generally contrive to keep in their minds for a long time the impressions made by any tricks which may have been played upon them, until a fit opportunity shall offer itself for revenging them. In this instance, however, for once, they departed from their usual custom, and, in consideration of the gallantry which these lords had display-

ed in battle, and in farther consideration of the very condescending and conciliatory manner in which they conducted themselves, when the vassals came to see them at the old lumbering castle which had been fitted up for their reception, they dismissed all their indignant feelings from their breasts, and began to welcome them most vociferously, giving them the most *uproarious* proofs in their power of the extent and the strength of the rapture which they felt on the occasion.

CHAPTER II.

*Difference between common and higher life.—
Manners of Narcissus — Taste for Old Women,
— Controller of Freszegaui. — The taste of Nar-
cissus for Lady Longbonnet. — Proposal of Nar-
cissus. — Hesitation of Lady Longbonnet. —
Meeting with her Brother.*

IN the common classes of society there are certain "small sweet courtesies of life which make smooth the way of it." Henry goes to visit Samuel, and is met by his friend at the door, who gives him a cordial shake by the hand; bids him welcome, and introduces him to his wife

and family, orders a bed to be made up for him in his best apartment, places him at his wife's right hand at table, takes him about every where, and exerts himself to make his visitor pass away his hours pleasantly. These constitute some of the principal enjoyments of the community; but in illustrious life manners vary prodigiously from this picture. There is a degree of dignity attached to such a situation as that of Narcissus, which prevents this freedom of intercourse, this unrestrained communion of friendship; for it cannot be doubted, since the inhabitants of castles tell us so, that it had been highly indecorous, and derogatory from his dignity, for Narcissus to have used his legs, and arms, and tongue, and other members and faculties, as his vassals would have done; it would have been, at once, destroying the distinction between lord and tenant.

In another point of view, also, it would have had an improper tendency ; it might have lessened the respect of the visitors for their host, to have discovered that his rapture to give them a welcome entirely got the mastery over his official pride ; and that after all which had been said about the power and the wealth of this Fever-isle, the chief of it was nothing better than a common clodhopper, and did not understand the etiquette of castles. Narcissus, however, was too good a judge of his own place, &c. to suffer his visitors to form any improper notions of his character. Besides, he had no great desire to run helter-skelter down the great road to the castle, at a time when all his vassals were about ; and after the very recent specimens of displeasure which he had received from them, he had no very anxious desire that his visitors should hear the hissings with

which, perchance, he might have been assailed, lest they should not recollect that his vassals were *geese*, and had no other way of showing their *approbation*? He had deputies enow to convey his felicitations, without either endangering his safety, degrading the dignity of his situation, or quitting for a moment the rapturous enjoyments of Curaçoa, a liquor remarkable for its power of invigoration and inspiration, and to which Narcissus was very greatly attached.— To be sure, he had his couriers and messengers, and a variety of great persons in waiting, ready to convey to him the first news of their approach to his castle, that he might have time very methodically and systematically to set his foot within the entrance saloon, to make his most graceful bow, and extend his arms theatrically to meet and receive the embraces of his guests.

Narcissus was universally considered the best bred gentleman in the world; viz. he could say the most with the least meaning, and yet in such a mode of elegance did he dress up nothing, that to the ear unpractised in polished life, it would seem to express every thing.— He could bridle his passions with unusual success; could keep up a spirited repartee with admirable effect, unless the spirit of his heart was counterweighed by the spirit in his head; he could so metamorphose language as to make the acme of indelicacy appear to be the soul of decorum, though, after all, it was but a well dressed and elegant bawd; he could play the hypocrite, religious, moral, or political, whenever he chose to conceal his real feelings; and withal, he could make the most gentlemanly acknowledgment for a compliment which can be imagined, or so speak a flattering

thing, as to give it a more than ordinary sweetness to the ear. He was well versed in physics and metaphysics ; understood anatomy, that of females in particular ; could write poetry, set it to music, play and sing it with exquisite taste ; he was a connoisseur in pictures ; a man of reading and a scholar ; he studied much, but principally Anacreon, Aristotle, Chaucer, and others of the same complexion, as he had only a smattering of history, which he picked up accidentally ; and, to crown his excellencies, he had an astonishing fine taste for old women. Youth and beauty, which usually win mankind, had no charms for him ; the first requisite to render a woman inimitable was age, the second bulk ;—the loveliness of twenty met with no amorous smiles at his castle, while the sight of a grandmother roused all the passions of his nature to excess.

The qualifications of Narcissus, however, were in danger of an eclipse the moment the Controller of Freezegaul set his foot in the castle. He was a tall comely man of some thirty-seven, and the fame of his exploits had pre-disposed all mankind in his favour. He was also amorous, and it was youth which gained his affections ; upon age he looked with the most chilling indifference. He adopted Cæsar's motto, "*Veni, Vidi, Vici ;*" for it was his constant maxim to make love the *avant courier* of enjoyment, and to suffer no time to elapse between the arrival of the former and the approach of the latter, lest envious Heaven should, in some wayward moment, forget he was a Controller, and throw an impediment in his way. No sooner did the Controller set eyes upon the beauties of this manor than he began to kiss and talk sweetly to them, and seemed

to entertain hostile designs against their hearts ; for his title was a pretty sure earnest of victory to him wherever he chose to direct his aim. Just before him came his sister, the Lady Longbonnet, a charming young widow of some two or three and twenty, whom rumour had intended to bestow on one of the brothers of Narcissus ; but when she found that they had all remarkably large heads, which were but very scantily supplied with brains, and, likewise, that they were but a fickle set of gentlemen, she altered her mind, and boldly resolved to have nothing at all to do with any of the minor members of the great family of the Fever-isle. But Narcissus himself seemed to have cast a longing eye upon this lovely lady, and made no scruple of declaring to her his passion ; according to some of the rumours of the day, which go on to state, that she objected, in con-

sequence of his having a wife, whom he had used ill: "and," said she, "you will perhaps not find the consistories and the councils and the vassals of your age quite so accommodating as they were in the days of your eighth lord Harry, who was, in truth, a very fortunate lord, and had a very happy knack of gaining the objects of his love." Narcissus informed her, that he hoped to be soon able to satisfy her on that head, for that he considered the levities and the kin of his wife quite as sound reasons now in favour of his release as they had been considered in the cases of the ladies Catherine and Anne Boleyn, at the period she alluded to. The lady Longbonnet made no reply at the time, but carried the argument of Narcissus home for her private meditations, when she immediately began to revolve it in her mind. Narcissus was but a deputy lord of a manor, while

Henry was a powerful lord ; and the times, too, were very favourable to his views, the people being anxious to throw off the authority of the Pope, and therefore sided the lord out of mere spite to his Holiness. Yet if this were considered a good ground for Henry, it would act as a strong precedent for Narcissus ; and surely that which was allowed to be law and justice for a lord, was also law and justice for a deputy-lord. Was the person of Narcissus agreeable ? She could not make any solid objection to it ; he was rather *old*, somewhat more than *double her own age* ; but as he had complimented her so far as to relinquish in her favour all his prepossessions in favour of *grandmothers*, and other *matronly* and *corpulent* ladies, she thought it was but right she should meet him half way, and give up her predilections for *younger gentlemen*. He had a good manor, and

could afford to keep her in splendor ; his vassals appeared to be very fond of her ; and, on the whole, it would not be quite prudent to reject the subject without due deliberation. She resolved to consult her brother.

It was at this interesting moment that the Controller of Freezegaul arrived.—The Lady Longbonnet was seated in her drawing-room wrapped in meditation on this very subject, when a carriage stopped at the door, and immediately afterwards a voice on the stair-case exclaimed, “ It is the Controller !” She could hear no more ; the next instant they were encircled in each other’s arms. It was some time before either recovered sufficient composure to enter into a cool conversation ; their feelings were in a high state of fermentation ; but the evaporation having at length subsided,

"welcome, my brother," said Lady Longbonnet, "to Fever-isle. I have impatiently waited your coming, and the vassals of the manor have run wild with curiosity to see the chastiser of insolence!"

"By Heaven, sister," replied the Controller, "I am so lost in astonishment at the apparent wealth and number of these vassals, as well as the manner in which they have received me, that I really scarcely know how to use my tongue. They must be an eccentric people, methinks. But you have had more time to study them—what think you of their character?"

"They are oddities, be assured, my dear brother," was her ladyship's answer, "and very little like *your vassals*. They are very bold, and make no more hesi-

tation to oppose their lord when he happens to displease them, than I should of opposing my cook if he were about to dress a dinner contrary to my wishes.—They are fond of me, and I am grateful for their preference.”

“That is no proof of their eccentricity, however,” answered the Controller; “but what are their habits, pray?”

“Oh, brother; their habits! Why, they eat and they drink, and they walk about, and ride about, and make a terrible noise in the streets. They are rather hasty in their tempers, and have a very blunt mode of expressing themselves. I never move out without a longer retinue at my heels than ever I could command in Freezegaul; and every now and then they make a most vociferous outcry, enough to rend the very skies,

and meaning, as one of them interpreted it to me when I first came, and enquired the reason of such a very great noise, "My Lady, we are very glad to see you." They have also a method of hissing like snakes or geese, and they have treated the Lord with a specimen or two of this description since I have been here, as much as to say, 'Sir, we don't like your goings on, and we have no wish to set eyes on you any more till you can behave better !' "

"That is a tolerable specimen of their independence, indeed," answered the Controller; "rather impudent, too, I think."

"So I thought, brother, at first, but I begin now to be used to it. It seems, from their history, which I have occupied myself in looking into since I came

here, that they have once cut off their lord's head; because he bore rather hardly upon them, and have forced several of their lords to measures of submission, so that they are obliged to be attended to a little ; and——”

The conversation was broken into by the entrance of some of the great friends of Narcissus, who had come in his name to bid the Controller welcome, and to conduct him to their deputy-lord, to meet the Lord of Brushall, who had just arrived.

CHAPTER III.

The author defendeth curiosity—detaileth the confusion of the Castle cooks—descanteth on the value of eating and drinking—Whiskers—Wisdom of Kings and Lords of Manors.

THOSE who call curiosity a vice, ignorantly or wittingly, (they are welcome to determine it which way they please,) libel all mankind, since it is palpably obvious that none is free from it. Let them moderate the censure, and apply the name to the excess, and we may possibly be inclined to concur in opinion with them in some instances. Surely it is not a vice, when it excites man to

pursuits of useful knowledge, when it teaches him to explore the mysteries of science, when it impels him to an acquaintance with the manners and customs, and laws and productions, and institutions, of other countries than his own, and stimulates him to that glorious expansion of mind which is the nurse of genius. What is it which has led to the gradual civilization of the human species? Curiosity! What has caused the exploration of the bowels of nations, and the discovery of all the precious treasures concealed in the womb of nature? Curiosity! Curiosity is the main spring of human exertion; for, without a thirst after knowledge, which is curiosity, the lords of all the manors on the universe, as well as their vassals, had been, at this moment, objects of pity, little removed from the character of beasts of the forest.

And it was curiosity which drew the Controller of Freezegaul and the Lord of Brushall, and their train of warriors and vassals, over to the Fever-isle; this was the propelling impulse which made them leave their manors to the care of their principal tenantry, while they crossed the wide and deep ditch to look at this wonderful isle. Report had inflamed their desires to behold the country which was so loudly talked of on their own manors; therefore, plucking up a gallant resolution, the two great lords, with a sort of hop, step, and jump journey, pitched upon one of the little necks of land which fringed the estate; and were now conducted with uncommon pomp into the presence of the dignified Narcissus.

The great preparations, however, which took place in the expectation of these

lords were not confined to the principal or state rooms of the castle. An equal or superior degree of bustle pervaded the kitchens, sculleries, stables, and every department. The head cook in the castle was an inhabitant of the neighbouring manor which these lords had been subduing, and Fricassee could not brook the idea of providing wholesome food for the invaders of his native estate. As soon, therefore, as he received orders to provide a sumptuous entertainment, he began to fume and to fret at a prodigious rate, and, being of a very passionate temper, at a single blow he dashed a most superb cut-glass stand into a thousand atoms. The crash gave him ease, and an ample volley of oaths immediately escaped him. He was mixing an unparalleled pudding, the very *chef d'œuvre* of his art; a bottle of julep was standing by his side intended for one

of his subordinates. Mistakes are naturally the effect of a perturbed mind ; and passion had so blinded the penetration of Fricassee, that, instead of port wine, which unhappily stood at his right elbow, he snatched the opening draught and conveyed it into the bowels of the pudding. So great was the confusion which reigned through the whole kitchen, that to none but Fricassee was the accident discernible, and he, chuckling within himself, at the anticipated effects of his superlative composition, inwardly swore it would be but a just revenge upon Narcissus for inviting to his manor the lords who were so obnoxious to his principal cook.

Order followed order in rapid succession ; and the whole of the capacious larders of the castle were filled with boars and eagles, and bucks and does,

and tortoises, and every other species of animal which nature designed for man to feed upon. Fricassee also ordered a prodigious quantity of frogs and mice to be gathered out of the ditches and bogs and old buildings about the manor, to make into side-dishes, in order to complete the elegance of the table. He also secretly vowed to make the lordly visitors partake of a little essence of toad, "for," said he, "they have made my countrymen, begar, eat forced meat, and dishes which they had no appetite nor inclination to relish." In short, the purveyors of the kitchens declare, that never since the days of Hurlothumbo, Heliogabalus, Salmagundi, and all the rest of these patrons of cooks and caterers, did such a profuse assembly of the animal and vegetable creation meet together.

And surely, since good eating and drinking form one of the most exquisite pleasures of mortal life, if we are to believe certain writers and the practice of experience, it is but reasonable and just that lords of manors who have all luxuries within their grasp, should indulge themselves therein to their very hearts' content. For what more imposing sight can be imagined, than to behold a lord, with a paunch of some four yards in girth, and a face bloated and blown out to the size of a full moon, in the act of stuffing himself with the choicest delicacies, with a napkin tucked under his chin, making his belly the first and dearest object of his affection and care, and thus illustrating the homely maxim that "charity begins at home !" Such is the portrait of Narcissus, who, when some of his more manly faculties had fallen victims to the excess of his indulgences,

consoled himself with the idea that he had still the disposition and the ability left to gorge two or three pounds of solid meat per diem, and to swallow, without losing his reason, his nine bottles of wine. In these matters it was his pride to excel all his vassals, that he might be worthy of the name of their lord ; and so well did he keep up his character in this particular, that, when his friends and advisers have come to seek him on a sudden emergency, it was no unusual circumstance to find him rolling under the table with the wife of one of his principal vassals, blessed with an equal gift of flesh with himself, bearing no weak resemblance to two butts of porter rolling from a brewer's dray, as though drunk with the liquor which filled them.

Now these strange lords were come to

visit him, Narcissus resolved to impress them not only with a very grand idea of his wealth, but also of his taste and unsurpassed talent for eating and drinking, and to tempt them into a little intemperance during their stay. For, as his own enjoyment consisted in the immoderate use of the good things of this world, it was very natural for him to persuade himself that others of equal rank with himself could not but be impressed with similar sentiments and feelings.— He therefore swore by his Curaçoa, which was his favourite and only binding oath, that they should eat and drink most sumptuously, and be treated in a manner which would do no discredit to the manor they were come to visit.

While Narcissus was thus resolving within himself what sort of treatment he could give to his visitors, a loud and reite-

rated shouting from without roused him from his reflections. Narcissus was very methodical in his movements ; no earthly inducement could make him so far forget himself as to commit his dignity by any unseemly precipitation. "Is that the Controller, or the Lord of Brushall?" asked the great man, yawning and stretching out his arms, but still keeping firm in his seat.

"Neither, Sir," replied Bumfield, who was stationed at the window to make observations, and to report the result of his discoveries to his master ; "the vassals cry out, 'Bull-dog! Bull-dog!'"

"Put on my whiskers," said Narcissus. Bumfield who was only second to Mahony in fidelity and in obsequiousness, reached from a morocco case, lined with satin and richly ornamented

with gold, a pair of enormous patches of sturdy hair, and, holding them for a moment before the fire, by one single stroke soldered them on each side of the face of Narcissus, who, surveying the contour of his countenance in a huge mirror which stood over against him, exclaimed, "Bravo, Bravissimo! Methinks I have something noble in my features!—Eh! Bumfield?"

Bumfield was at no loss for an answer; he had too long studied the manners and the etiquette of courts to be pozed about finding a compliment. "Sir," said he, "I am no flatterer; but may I never meet your most illustrious form in Heaven, if I really do not consider you pre-eminent amongst all the lords of the earth. Your visitors, Sir, will be petrified at the sight of these most Jupiter-like whiskers!"

“Jove never had such whiskers,” returned Narcissus. “There was no Ross in those heathenish times—no man of genius, who, by the simple arrangement of a few hairs, could throw wisdom into a countenance which had none before! Not that I mean to say that my face is utterly destitute of expression, barring my whiskers!”

This was a fit opportunity for Bumfield to pour a little “oil of fool” into his master’s ear. “In truth, Sir,” said the complaisant lacquey, “no whiskers’ aid can render perfection more perfect!” And as he said this, he made a very low bow, as if to say, “I mean, Sir, that your face hath always wisdom in it.”

Narcissus understood the compliment, and smiled with the utmost condescension as he answered, “Bumfield, you—

are a partial judge ; but, after all, I think I am no fool." And at this moment a second shouting, still more loud than the first, followed by the repeated cries of "Bull-dog! Bull-dog!" cut short his eloquence. "Bumfield," said he, "reach the miniature which is suspended from yonder mirror." Bumfield obeyed, and while he performs the orders of his master, the reader may endeavour to digest the expression of Narcissus.

A witty but very wicked bard hath profanely talked thus in some of his flights of impertinence—

"Say not unto a King, "Thou fool!" For why?
" 'Tis unpolite—though, possibly, no lie!"

But this bard, as we have before said, was wicked and profane; and therefore when he says that so great a man as a

king or a lord of a manor, (which is, in fact, a species of king,) may possibly be a fool, he evidently tells an untruth, and writeth, as he is instigated, by malice aforethought: and, if this were not a country merciful above all other countries, and a manor wherein no one was ever persecuted for a libel upon its lord, or upon any of the great vassals, this same bard would, doubtless, have been treated with a little salutary imprisonment; or as has been the custom in some very heathenish countries, might have been elevated to a station in the pillory, and have been complimented with a very proper abridgment of his organs of hearing. But the falsity of the assertion was evident upon its face; as every vassal of Fever-isle was satisfied that neither Narcissus nor any one of his family ever betrayed the slightest symptoms of folly, but were, from time immemorial, considered the

wisest, and greatest, and richest, and happiest, lords which any manor in the known world could produce. The assertion of the bard therefore could not apply to this manor, and, of course, it would have been only a waste of time and patience for the judges of the manor to have taken cognizance of that which, in itself, was so notoriously false, that it was impossible it could gain any credit, and, consequently, it was also impossible that it could effect any kind of mischief.

CHAPTER IV.

Men in Harness—Origin of the custom—Reception of Bull-dog—Arrival at the Castle of the Controller of Freezegaul and Lord of Brushall—The Controller's penetration—Lady Longbonnet and Narcissus.

THE vassals of Fever-isle had imbibed a desire to imitate horses, mules, asses, and other beasts of burden ; and this disposition they cultivated with the most assiduous care on every favourable opportunity, by harnessing themselves to the carriages of those persons for whom they felt the greatest respect, and drag-

ging them through the towns and villages of the manor. This was considered a mode of showing respect which was peculiar to this manor, and may certainly be accounted a relic of feudal barbarism, since it tended more to degrade the vassals themselves than to exalt the consequence of the object of their adulation. A certain writer, one Heterodovicus, who lived about the year 1413, asserts, that this custom of drawing men about was very ancient, and that it was a sort of penance inflicted on profligate and obdurate sinners by Pope—somebody, whose name is obliterated from the record. It would seem that these devoted impenitents were yoked and collared with iron, and compelled to drag holy monks from convent to convent, until they had worked out the debt they owed to Heaven. As this was the punishment of unsanctified men in these ancient

ages, it is natural to infer that the vassals of Fever-isle being conscious that they were sinners, anticipated the punishment to which they might hereafter be doomed, and, by way of lightening the burthen of the future, amused themselves with undergoing a little voluntary penance now and then. Of whatever antiquity the custom may be, we can see but little room to justify it on the score of its rationality ; and must consider it as having a strong tendency to prove that the great majority of the Fever-isle vassals were little better than absolute fools. At least the only alternative of the argument would be, that they were in civilization behind asses ; since, Heaven knows ! this latter species of animals have too much reason to stoop to this kind of drudgery unless they are whipped into a forced obedience to the will of their task-master.

- It was this sort of reception which the Fever-islanders gave to Bull-dog, who had been a very gallant warrior under his master, the Lord Brushall, in the late quarrel with Boneypuppy, and had actually so beat the latter from one part of his usurped manor to another, as to drive him at last entirely out of it. And it was this thrashing of Boneypuppy which had made Bull-dog so great a favourite with the vassals of Fever-isle, that they could not sufficiently show their gratitude without unhorsing his carriage, and lugging him up to the very gates of the castle. The old veteran was not a little disconcerted at this very singular mode of giving him a welcome, and could not, for his soul, dismiss some unpleasant apprehensions which had taken possession of him, before the meaning and intention of the people were made clear to him. "They

are not used to do these things in Freeze-gaul," said Bull-dog ; " we are drawn there by rein-deer."

" And here by *bears*, my dear Sir," replied Bumfield, and looked at Bull-dog as though he expected same approbation for this attempt at a witticism. But seeing the stranger most perversely silent, as though the essence of the *bon-mot* had entirely escaped him, the courtier most emphatically repeated, " And here by *bears* !"

" Perhaps, then, they have squeezed you, Sir," replied Bull-dog ; " for to me they carry nothing of the appearance of the bears I have been accustomed to behold. Bears are usually ferocious ; your vassals here appear to study kindness : and, however you may think yourself justified in brutalizing them, I should

ill deserve their distinction could I ungratefully join with you."

Bumfield was evidently disconcerted ; he had expected the reply of a courtier, full of dishonesty and deceit, and was somewhat staggered at the voice of plain and undissembled truth. Two or three times he attempted either to find courage or words, but every endeavour proved ineffectual : the whole amount of his reply consisted of a single " Humph ! " followed by a very expressive stare ; after which he held his arm to assist Bull-dog in alighting from his carriage, while Mahony silently stationed himself on the opposite side ; for the rebuff given to Bumfield had effectually tied the Secretary's tongue : and, thus attended, the veteran stranger proceeded at a slow pace into the castle, evidently astonished at the novelty and

splendor of the scene which surrounded him.

“Welcome, gallant Bull-dog!” exclaimed Narcissus, as the veteran foreigner set his first step on the inside of the castle door; and at the same instant he took the brilliant miniature from his neck, and placed it, suspended from a superb chain, round that of the warrior, in the presence of ten thousand vassals, who had clambered up the castle walls and mounted on the gates to view the reception of the guest. The crowd shouted with exultation at the act of Narcissus, who, unused to such expressions of approbation, gave a sudden start at first, but quickly recollecting himself, made his most polished bow to the multitude. Bull-dog, who was completely overwhelmed with such a distinguished mark of grateful esteem, knelt

down while the honourable token was placed round him, and then he, who had, unmoved, stood the brunt of battle, and had braved death without shrinking for a moment, took out his handkerchief, and applied it to his eyes, to conceal and check the overflowings of a bosom moved from its native and habitual sternness by the warm touch of affectionate regard ! Some dozen or two of the distinguished vassals who stood round Narcissus, and who had never been accustomed to relax from the fortitude of their natures, except when any danger threatened their safety, even condescended to look affected, although those persons who are most conversant with the manners and customs of these companions of the deputy-lord will only allow them the very barren credit of playing the hypocrite to perfection. Narcissus himself was said to be a compleat profi-

cient in this art, having, at various times, performed a number of opposite characters on the theatre of life; and it was shrewdly suspected, that even on this occasion, he could not conceal his natural predilection for duplicity, but gave it full and free exercise, and admirably deceived the spectators into a belief that he felt what he expressed.

This was a splendid afternoon for Narcissus and his vassals; for, no sooner had Bull-dog been conducted into the dinner-room, before the Controller of Freeze-gaul and the Lord of Brushall, with a number of young lords, and a long train of vassals came in succession to the castle, and, as they were recognized by the people, received enthusiastic tokens of the public approbation.—The meeting of these distinguished personages was exactly according to the

etiquette of the times, and strictly conformable to the rank of the high parties themselves. Every bow was regulated by custom, and in order that Narcissus might not waste a single bow, nor express himself in any terms exceeding in warmth what the occasion required, a prompter stood close behind him, with a book of precedents in his hand, out of which he very frequently jogged the memory of his master, and told him into what posture he might throw himself, to what degree of kindness he might model his look, and how far the ardour of his language might be carried, without infringing upon the practice of the lords of those days which had passed away.— With the aid of this prompter, Narcissus conducted himself with great *eclat* ; every word was dressed in dignity, and, doubtless, impressed the foreign lords with a very high idea of the consequence

of the speakers. Whatever might have been their sentiments, they certainly displayed every symptom of gratification at the mode of their reception, and it is said their reply was brief and expressive.

“Happy and wealthy manor!—Happy lords in such vassals!—Happy vassals in such a deputy lord!” Several vassals, however, whispered,—“God mend their penetration!”

From the moment of the arrival of these great lords all was hurry and bustle at the castle and chief town of Feverisle. The stay of the visitors was to be extremely short, and much was to be seen. Parties were therefore immediately formed, and it was settled that the Controller and his sister, Lady Longbonnet, should have the loan of one of the carriages of Narcissus, and that another should be at the service of the Lord

of Brushall and his sons. There was also another young lord, named Orange-graft, for whom Narcissus designed his daughter, and it was resolved that he should have a lift with either the one or the other, as convenience or inclination might direct. On the following morning, it was determined by the Controller and his suite to view the establishments where all the money and the arms of the manor were deposited, and respecting the magnitude and construction of which report had said great things to them.

“At what hour,” asked Narcissus, “is it your lordship’s intention to go to the other end of the town in the morning, as I shall feel pleasure in accompanying you *incog* ? I shall have breakfasted by four with a little extraordinary exertion.”

“Indeed !” replied the Controller,

“your lordship is willing to rise with the sun ; unlike those lords who, giving way to indolence and sloth, suffer it to shed its meridian beams upon their unbroken slumbers.”

Mahony saw that the Controller was in an error, and knowing that etiquette would not allow a public contradiction, he gently stole behind the chair of the visitor, and in a low whisper respectfully informed him that Narcissus certainly did not mean to say four in the morning ; and consequently his lordship found that he had most involuntarily been censuring his noble host, at the very outset of their acquaintance. Narcissus, however, being a lord of very excellent breeding, the mistake excited no other visible sensation than a most hearty laugh, and this passed off very well. It was arranged that the Controller and his sister should go by themselves on the

following morning, as they showed but little disposition to wait for Narcissus beyond ten o'clock, an hour at which he candidly confessed that he considered it absolutely impossible that he could rise, in consequence of some symptoms of indisposition which assailed him.

Lady Longbonnet felt an unusual pleasure at the idea of such a speedy *tête-à-tête* with her brother, as she was more than commonly anxious to take his opinion on the subject of the propositions made to her by Narcissus, which had been very frequently revived within the last few days, and had evidently made some impression upon her mind. The Controller himself, too, who was a pretty accurate observer of human nature, and generally made a tolerably free use of his eyes, had perceived some discourse which passed between the eyes

of his sister and those of Narcissus, and which he found no kind of difficulty in interpreting ; for, as it hath been said, we dare be bound, times without number, although there are diversities of tongues, varying according to the climates to which they belong, and although the orator in one language, without education, is unintelligible to the orator in another, the eyes universally speak one dialect and one tongue, and are understood at the first glance by persons of countries the most remote, and habits the most foreign from each other. The soul has but one language, and that is the language for which nature has provided one mode of expression familiar to all. It is, therefore, not to be wondered at, that, although the Controller's penetration and understanding were foreign, they well understood the expression conveyed by the eyes of

Narcissus ; and, truth to say, the discovery caused more pleasure than uneasiness to his lordship, for, although he was well aware that Narcissus had a consort, he also knew that she was entirely shut out of the pale of his affection, and that, being the lord of a manor, he could very easily liberate himself from bondage, or exchange his fetters whenever he might think it expedient. Besides, no doubt, the Controller expatiated much to himself on the great advantages which would result from a still closer cement of the interests of two such powerful manors, which, united, might dictate laws to all the surrounding land-owners. It was perfectly natural that such reflections and calculations would enter into the brain of his lordship, as soon as his eyes, those vigilant centinels, had reported to him what they had seen ; and, as interest is the

most powerful bond which binds persons of all ranks together, it is not to be wondered at that the Controller, at the first glance of the business, relished the prospect exceedingly.

Narcissus himself had also resolved to open his views to the Controller, during his visit at the castle, and to suggest to him the good consequences which must accrue from the scheme he had chalked out. Now and then, it is true, he felt a trifling qualm of conscience respecting his wife, because she had been a good wife to him, and had given him, in no one instance, any real ground for his desertion of her. These unwelcome feelings, however, he quickly contrived to dismiss from his breast, most patriotically arguing thus within himself—It is for public interest that I should be happy, because equanimity

would naturally make me good-natured, and if I were always good-natured I should govern my vassals by kindness instead of power, and should hear all their complaints and redress all their grievances, and do every thing for them which they could make up their minds to solicit from me—*ergo*, it is expedient that I should be happy. Now I cannot be happy with my present wife, because she is personally disagreeable to me, and has excited an unconquerable aversion from her in my breast ; and I find I could be happy with another person whom I have now seen : therefore it is perfectly right that I should rid myself of my plague, and take to myself that which would give me consolation. Individual sacrifices must be made for the public good ; and the sacrifice of my present wife is rendered necessary, and can be justified upon this ground. Why

then should I give myself any farther trouble on the subject? She shall go to the wall, and that is flat, for to take another to my arms I am fully determined, and that other shall be the dear, bewitching, and powerful Lady Longbonnet. Let whoever will oppose it, it matters not; I have made up my mind on the subject, and have her I will if I overrun and destroy a thousand manors.

As soon as his guests had retired at night, Narcissus called Bumfield and Mahony to impart to them the substance of his thoughts, for they were uniformly the repositories of his secrets, and, being two very trusty gentlemen, it is, probably, through their means that numberless secrets have quitted the atmosphere of the castle and descended to instruct and delight those in inferior stations of life. They listened to all

Narcissus advanced with the most profound silence and attention, except when they now and then thought it politic to interlard a few expressions of applause; and, when he had finished, both immediately rose from their seats, and, with ten thousand ejaculations of delight and astonishment, declared it to be the wisest of all plans which ever entered into the conception of the most profound politicians of any country or any times. This dose of flattery was well adapted to the taste of Narcissus, who condescendingly compelled them to drink till the whole were carried to bed.

CHAPTER V.

A dissertation on Oranges—The distlike of the vassals to an Orange—Narcissus sendeth for his daughter—Her independence—His anger—Her obduracy—His question—Her answer and departure.

EARLY on the following day, Narcissus sent for his daughter Charlotte, for he had determined to marry her out of hand. She was now near seventeen years of age, and it was natural to expect that she would be looking pretty sharply after the young men; and, as she was known to be the heiress to the

manor, he feared lest some designing fortune-hunters should lay traps for her, and decoy her unawares. With this impression upon his mind, he resolved to marry her outright as soon as he could find what he might consider a suitable match, for, as to her taste and choice they were to be put entirely out of the question. If she approved the man of her father's selection it was well, things might go on more pleasantly; if she disapproved it was equally well, since it would show the Fever-islanders that the family maxim with their lord was, that *individual sacrifices* must be submitted to for the public good. Narcissus, though now and then he could keep a secret pretty closely, (for instance, the cause of his separation from his wife, which he has inviolably preserved within his own breast,) had, by some means, dropped a hint or two of his present intentions to

some of his favourite companions over the bottle ; and, as they had their friends out of the castle to whom they entrusted the plan, with a very few natural additions, it soon got pretty well talked of throughout the whole manor, and created a strange difference of opinion among the vassals both in and out of the castle. It was generally understood that Orangegrass was to be the happy youth ; and, as he was *poor, half-starved, half-manufactured, abridged of some inches of his natural height and girth*, and as none had ever yet read of, or heard of, or witnessed the numerous qualities which as a young lord he must necessarily have possessed, the consequence was, the silly, blind, and stupid vassals took it into their heads that he was, as they expressed, only *half-starved*, and that he really had no virtues at all belonging to his illustrious composition, and therefore

they talked very freely about the match, and made no hesitation to damn it with their most violent disapprobation.

The vassals within the castle also, those with whom Narcissus usually consulted on all important occasions, were very sore upon this occasion, as they had not received the least item of the business. They therefore took airs upon themselves, and said they were treated with a great-deal of disrespect and inattention, and declared that they would not consent to demand a subscription of the vassals in order to portion the young lady out, unless they were pretty speedily advised with upon the business. Some of them censured the proposed match as being very unequal, young Orange-graft being so much inferior to the heiress of Fever-isle manor, both in endowments and in fortune: his father

having only just been restored to his manor, after a very long persecution and exile, and having now assumed the title of the lord without a sufficient authority, as these casuists asserted. They contended, that the daughter of Narcissus, being gifted with so many choice endowments, and having such splendid prospects in reversion, was not unworthy of the hand of the lord of the first manor which the world could produce. Unfortunately, however, it so happened that all the lords of manors were either married, and had no wish to get rid of their wives, or that they were too old for the young lady, who possessed such a very violent spirit; that it would have been dangerous to have proposed any husband to her who had passed the vigour of life. There were even some doubts about offering to her notice young Orangegrass, lest she might fly off in

some of her high airs, and thus, in a moment, destroy all her father's hopes and expectations. She had, however, received the proposition more favourably than had been expected; for, to tell truth, she had contrived to get a peep at the young man, and the consequence was, that she felt no very violent disinclination to receive his attentions.

Narcissus found it necessary, notwithstanding, just to inform his vassals in the castle, that he had concerted a marriage between the young couple, but as they were not so polite as to return any other answer than merely to thank him for telling them of it, no discussion nor dissension took place respecting it. Thus stood matters when the noble visitors arrived within the manor, and Narcissus, being determined, if possible, that they should be present at the marriage of his

daughter, now sent for her to come to him, that he might hasten the nuptials by a little personal persuasion.

In about half an hour Charlotte arrived, and was conducted into her father's breakfast-room, but it required no great proficiency in physiognomy to discover that she was by no means in the best or most accommodating humour in the world. Narcissus was a little disconcerted on beholding her haughty and gloomy countenance, from which he augured very little success. He had taken it into his head that her mother had been frequently, of late, poisoning the mind of her daughter against him ; and stirring it up to an unfilial and impertinent opposition to his will ; and the first conviction which settled itself upon his mind was, that she had been preparing Charlotte this morning to show some farther

act of disobedience. He was aware that the young lady was grown out of the reach of his correction, and that every thing at this moment must entirely depend upon the skilfulness with which he might be enabled to manage her temper ; for if he offended her by any harshness of language, or imperativeness of tone, he would have betted his head to a farthing that she had marched off without giving him time to say one twentieth part of what he intended and wished to say to her, and what, indeed, he would by some means make her listen to. “ Come, Charlotte,” said he, drawing close to his own the chair which Mahony had placed for her. “ Come here, my dear ; I want to speak to you upon a subject of great importance, and very interesting to both of us.”

“Humph !” replied Charlotte, casting

a curious glance at Narcissus, " Pray go on, father !"

Narcissus hardly knew how to go on. The pride and *sang-froid* which were so conspicuous in the manner of his daughter had well nigh deprived him of all power of utterance. For some minutes he turned over in his mind what would be the best mode of address, and, as he was cutting a roll upon his plate, at every new idea, the eccentric change in his motions attracted the notice of his daughter, who bither lips in silence.— " Will you take breakfast, Charlotte?" asked Narcissus.

" Very important and interesting to us both, indeed !" echoed Charlotte.— " Well, father, I will take breakfast ; and now let me beg of you to be as speedy in beginning, and as brief in concluding

any thing you may have to say to me, as possible ; for you know this is one of the mornings when I am allowed to see my mother, and I would not be out of the way when she comes for all the world, for I have got such a great deal, such a very great deal to say to her."

Narcissus frowned and knit his brows. — "What can you have to say to your mother, Charlotte?" and he fixed his eyes upon her, as if to penetrate the secrets of her soul, and to detect her if she endeavoured to deceive him.

"Lord, father, you need not stare at one so!" responded Charlotte. "Put your ear close, and I'll whisper what I have got to say to my mother. I mean to tell her every word you say to me this morning; and then, you know, there will be my answers, and then there will

be my comments to my mother, and then there will be my mother's comments to me, and so between one thing and another, now, don't you think yourself it will take us till dinner time ?”

“Hell and the devil!” exclaimed Narcissus, in a furious tone of voice, at the same moment letting fall the cup of coffee which he was handing to his daughter. Then, suddenly recollecting himself, he softened down the harshness of his tone in a moment, and, apologizing for his awkwardness, added with a smile on his countenance, “Upon my soul, Charlotte, you are the most tormenting little minx I ever beheld. But I won't be cheated out of your company this morning, for I have a great deal indeed to say to you, and I don't very often catch an opportunity to speak to you.”

“ And when you do catch an opportunity, you don’t always find me in a humour to listen, and that is much my case at this moment, father,” cried Charlotte. “ And now do give me another cup of coffee, and let me go, for I can’t bear the thought of my mother coming, and finding that I have come here so early this morning. Why, Lord bless me! it is but one o’clock: I dare say what you have got to talk to me about disturbed you so much all night that you could not sleep in your bed, or you would not have been up for these three hours to come, at the very earliest.— Now speak, papa!”

“ Gods, girl! your tongue runs round like a windmill in a hurricane!” answered Narcissus. “ You won’t allow me to put in a single word scarcely. But now, to be serious—for it is a serious subject——”

“ Oh then, I do most abominably hate it, and, if you please, we will put it off till to-morrow ; for, I really have neither time nor inclination just now to hear any thing very serious. But, oh ! father, I had such a dream last night, such a very comical dream—you shall hear my dream. You must know, father, that I dreamt I saw my Grandpapa that was killed, you know, and he looked so angry and so dreadful, and had such a huge wound, from which the blood dropped : and he came into a room where you and I were sitting, as we may be now—”

“ Pshaw, girl !” interrupted Narcissus, “ I’ll hear none of your nonsensical dreams ! Go tell them to your governess, and some of your maids. I want to talk to you of matters of more importance to both of us.”

“Now, papa of mine,” said Charlotte, “I must tell you that it is monstrous rude to interrupt me in the very middle of my story; and I declare and vow, that if you won’t hear the rest of my dream, I will not listen to the long, dull, serious, prosing story that you say you have got to tell me. So now listen to me. As I said, my grandfather came into this room, and fixing his great dead eyes upon you, he first of all shook his head, and then raised up his arm, as if to threaten you; and then he began to tell you about my mother, and how you had used her, and——”

“Peace, girl! you get too saucy,” vociferated Narcissus, whose countenance had been for some moments distorted with the excess of his agony; “I’ll hear no more of your trash; so once for all, pray attend to what I am going to say.”

“ I—will—not ! So now, father, you may do as you like, for that is poz !— I don’t care a bit what you say, nor what you think neither ; for, if you won’t hear me, I’ll be hanged if I will hear you, and that’s all fair, you know.”

Narcissus, unused as he was to any thing like opposition to his will, could ill brook it in the present instance ; for some time all his faculties seemed entirely suspended with anger and astonishment. He essayed two or three times to frown at his daughter ; but, as often as he turned his eyes towards her, he saw such a cool and playful indifference pictured on her countenance, that he anticipated no good effects from such a display of impotent anger. He strove to speak, but words were for once disobedient, and refused to come at his command. In the mean time, Charlotte

kept humming a tune and drinking her coffee, not appearing to take the slightest notice of her father's anger and agitation, until, after having sung herself into a more accommodating humour she resumed, " Lord, father, why you need not fret and fume so ! It's all fair and just to do as you would be done by ; so as you interrupted me so many times in the very middle of my story, I thought you could not say one word about my refusing to listen to you. But, now, just to put you into good humour, and get away, for I really do want very much to return home, though I won't tell you whom it is to meet any more, for fear you should fly off again, pray tell me in about *ten* words, or not exceeding *fifteen* at the most, what it is you would be pleased to say to me !" Narcissus continued silent ; he had not yet sufficiently gratified his rage to make

any thing like a gentle reply ; so that his daughter, pouring herself out another cup of coffee, resumed her song—

“ Oh ! What a plague is an obstinate daughter ! ” &c.

By the time she had got through the final stanza of her song, Narcissus was sufficiently recovered to collect his sentiments, and embody them into words. “ Really, Charlotte,” said he, “ I declare you quite put me in a passion. I never in my life witnessed such a provoking, disobedient, little, good-for-nothing hussey ! To behave so to your father, just at the moment that he was about to propose an arrangement which would have insured your happiness for life ! You must, indeed, be more attentive to me.”

A fine *orange* lay on a sideboard.—

Charlotte, without making any reply, rose from her chair, and, walking very leisurely across the room, took up the fruit, and, returning to her seat, exclaimed, "*This* is a nice one; I love *oranges* like these, which are *full grown*; but I can't relish your *half-decayed, withered, stunted*, fruit: to be sure a poor *orange* is better than none!"

"I would give you a fine *orange*," said Narcissus: "one of rich growth, if not gigantic size; and I don't care how soon you allow me to graft you upon the tree, that we may have a multiplication of the sort. And now this is what I wished to say to you."

"And is that all?" asked Charlotte, assuming a look of disappointment: "Is that the mighty serious thing which required such a very tiresome preface?—"

In truth, like many other prefaces, it was much longer, it seems, than the matter which it prefaced. But, after all, it was very prettily spoken and very briefly, which made it pretty. And now you shall hear my answer; and then, after that, I will make you hear my dream. In the first place, father, for all the *oranges* in the world, I would not leave my own native manor *to go into the country where they grow to get them*. Secondly, my good father, when ever you mean to graft me on an *orange* or any other tree, my mother shall be with me to see that I am grafted according to her desire. And if I cannot get *oranges* at home, and have my mother always at my elbow, I'll never taste the nasty filthy fruit as long as I live; and that is poz, now, papa!" And so saying, with a sudden jerk, she sent the orange entirely across the room, while

Narcissus, wrapped in greater amazement than before, sat for a few minutes and surveyed his daughter, who, playing with her cup and saucer, appeared as perfectly free from discomposure as though nothing whatever had occurred.

“And this is your determination, eh?” asked Narcissus, as soon as he could possibly recover breath enough to speak to her.

“That is my determination, father,” replied his daughter; “and as you don’t seem much in the humour to listen to the rest of my dream at this moment; and as you cannot have any thing more to say now you have finished your story, and heard my answer, I beg to take my leave of you, and to wish you a very good morning; for I should not at all wonder if my poor dear mother is not at my

apartments now, fretting herself at the thought that I am such a giddy, thoughtless undutiful girl, as to let her wait for my coming back again one single moment. Good bye, father!"

And as she said this, she dropped a rapid curtsey to her father, and skipped out of the room at about three steps, leaving Narcissus in a state of mind, of which, as we will not attempt to describe it, we cannot do better than wish him speedy riddance.

CHAPTER VI.

The Controller visiteth the repository of the money of the manor, and the place where the arms are kept—Lady Longbonnet telleth him a secret which he had previously discovered.

WHILE Narcissus was thus engaged with his daughter, the Controller and his sister had proceeded to view the establishment where the money of the manor was deposited. This was a very massive building, divided into numerous departments, through each of which the visitors were conducted by one of the managers, who explained to the lordly relatives every thing which they

did not, at the moment, comprehend. The original currency in the manor had been gold, silver, and copper ; but, since the manor had been involved in disputes, the former had entirely disappeared, and, notwithstanding his utmost exertions, the lord had been unable to manufacture new supplies adequate to fill up the deficiency which had been thus left : in consequence of this absence of gold, therefore, the managers of this establishment had been empowered to issue paper of a certain description, which was circulated in lieu of a more substantial medium, and by their profits on which, arising from the loss of these valuable scrips and other circumstances, they contrived to enrich themselves, to maintain this great building, and nearly a thousand clerks who were employed in and about it ; besides which, in the event of an emergency, they would fre-

quently lend immense sums to the lord of the manor.

In viewing all this establishment, and the apparatus with which this fictitious money was manufactured, the Controller was particularly inquisitive, asking his questions (as is the manner of those lords of manors) with such rapidity, that the manager could scarcely answer them in detail. "What is become of all your gold? How do you manage to support your credit and reputation upon nothing better than a paper foundation? Who built this place? How much did it cost? Where is the plan of it? Who invented the system? What does its maintenance cost annually? How many persons do you employ? Who and what are *you*?"

To all these questions the manager

began to make reply, commencing with the last, as he no doubt considered it possible that he might forget to communicate to the Controller the important information of his name and station in the establishment, with which he considered it indispensable that his lordship should be made acquainted, that he might call it to mind, whenever he might be disposed to dispense his favours among the vassals of Fever-isle. He therefore took out an elegant morocco case, ornamented with gold, and presenting a very neatly bordered card to the Controller, which he selected out of a parcel, he respectfully spoke,—“Sir, this card will inform your lordship of my name, whenever it shall please your lordship to honour your servant with a thought.”

The Controller smiled, and taking the card in his left hand, he raised a certain

magnifying glass to his eye with his right, and began to read the lines on the card. " Oh, Mr. Mannikin ! very well, Sir ! and I presume you are one of the persons who have the direction of this magnificent building ;" and then the Controller shook hands with the manager, which put the latter into such a transport, that, like a man beside himself, he cut two or three very excellent capers, and bowed till he touched the very ground with his forehead. " And pray, Mr. Mannikin, have you no gold in your possession this moment ? Is it all conveyed over the ditch ?"

Mr. Mannikin then, without scarcely making any reply at all, led the visitors into a very elegant room, where bags on bags, and bars on bars of gold were piled up to the ceiling, outshining even the fairy abodes of the eastern stories,

where suites of apartments are all filled with massy riches, dazzling the eye, and confounding it. But all these sights had only been seen in description; it was now, for the first time, that the Controller was destined to see any thing like the reality. "Zounds, Mr. Mannikin;" said he, as soon as he could give expression to his feelings, "why where the devil did you gain all this? All the riches of the universe seem to be collected into this one pile of building, and yet some of your discontented vassals complain of their poverty? Why, there is enough wealth within these walls to purchase all my manor, large as it is, and fifty others around it. None but fools will ever think of invading your boundaries, while you are so well provided with that valuable material which constitutes the sinews of war!"

Our happy manager felt himself grow some inches while the Controller passed this distinguished eulogy on the wealth of the institution, which he was thus showing to him ; and, anxious to show his wit, replied, " Yes, sir, an't please your lordship, as they call many of us *bulls*, they may call this the *golden calf* which we have made." And then he made a very low bow to the ground, and the Controller smiled very graciously upon him, as much as to say, " Mr. Mannikin, I am pleased !"

" This puts me greatly in mind of the wonders wrought by the wand of Abdallah," said the illustrious visitor to his sister, as they left this magnificent pile ; " I declare I could not have conceived the extent of the wealth of this manor, any more than I could the easy independence of its vassals. The former is in-

exhaustible; the latter are ungovernable."

"I agree with you, brother," returned Lady Longbonnet; "respecting the wealth of the manor. The magic wand is surely kept here, and riches will never fail. And as to the vassals, they are very subordinate, except when their lord violates all distinctions of right and wrong, and actually requires a check; and then they will be heard; and when lords of manors forget that they are men, my brother, and that they wield a delegated power, the public arm should hold them back if they would run into the excesses of tyranny."

The Controller looked at his sister for a moment with astonishment, and then asked, "What, my dear sister, do you consider that Narcissus is ever tempted

to run into this extreme? Is it possible that he whose family owes so much to the vassals of this manor, since they expelled another line of lords to call them to the estate—is it possible that he can ungratefully turn against those very people who have given him his power over them? Every description of tyranny is odious, but this the most odious.”

“I have my apprehensions, brother, on the subject,” replied Lady Longbonnet; “but perhaps I judge rashly. I will endeavour to be more charitable; for I know him to be a man of excellent information, and a refined taste; and therefore he must be aware, if he reflect at all, that as his power emanated from the vassals, to them it may revert sooner than he is aware, should he abuse it.”

"You are grown quite a political free-thinker since you came into this country," returned the Controller.

"A free-thinker I certainly am, in matters of this description, brother ; for I condemn the creed which holds out the infallibility of high rank, and would make even lords of manors amenable to the public, as well as to Heaven, for their actions. Wrong is wrong in all classes of society ; it varies not out of compliment to its possessor ; it is equally vile and equally punishable in the sight of God ; and why then should we learn to abhor it in the vassal, but to admire it in the lord ? Thus far, brother, I am a free-thinker, but no further. You know where I imbibed my moral and political principles. I hold subordination as a duty from the tenant to his lord, which can never be forfeited at the caprice or

pleasure of the inferior, without the superior has so misconducted himself as to have broken the tie which cements them to each other in their separate degrees and relations. And now, my quizzical brother, if you are disposed to believe this doctrine, I have a secret to tell you, respecting which I would fain have a little of your very brotherly advice, which you know I consider of some value."

"Willingly, willingly, my dear sister!" replied the Controller. "I coincide fully with you in your political opinions; so now, prithee, let me know what this wonderful secret may be which requires so much consultation."

Without waiting for his sister's reply, the Controller had penetrated her secret, and felt all the observations he had be-

fore made respecting the views of Narcissus fully borne out. From his sister's manner, too, he felt assured, that she was by no means indisposed to listen to his proposals; and he had already launched out into the ocean of calculation and speculation on the advantages which might accrue to his own manor from an union between the two families; when Lady Longbonnet, in a low tone of voice, and with a hesitating accent, related to him all the offers which Narcissus had made to her.

"Well, sister," said the Controller, "and what was the sort of reply that you made to these flattering proposals?"

The kindness of his voice and the affection of his manner re-assured Lady Longbonnet, who, in a firmer tone, replied, "My dear brother, what could I

say to him ? I told him he had already a consort, whom report said he had used ill ; and, setting aside the impediment this circumstance would prove to his wishes, the ill-usage of one wife was but a poor pledge of happiness to another. And then I noticed very slightly the disparity of our ages, as he is old enough to be my grandfather."

" Pho !" replied the Controller ; " what is age to you ? You have had one husband for pleasure ; you want another for interest ; and this appears to be a most excellent opportunity of consulting your own advantage. As to the existence of impediments, that is but a poor argument to a lord of the manor, since he has the power to remove them all at his pleasure. And what is his treatment of his lady to you ? You will not receive worse usage ; and you would

think yourself well off even to have a castle of your own, and an establishment at the expence of the manor, and the title of its lady ; I think it looks likely, sister."

"Well, then, my brother," answered Lady Longbonnet, "since it meets with your approbation, I have only to beg that you will keep it a secret for the present. And, as I have your interest in view as much as my own in this business, you may as well take upon yourself to make the necessary arrangements with Narcissus according to your own wish."

The Controller agreed ; and by this time they had arrived at the depository of the arms of the manor, which contained also a vast quantity of arms which had been taken from the vassals of other manors in their attempts to trespass

upon this estate. The noble visitors were highly gratified at the sight of the curiosities and valuables contained in this huge mass of building: for here, besides the arms, all the rich jewels were kept with which the lords were always invested upon their first taking possession of the estate. The curiosities of this place seemed, on the whole, to excite less attention than the yards through which the Controller passed, where the process of building those vessels which made the manor unassailable was carried on. Here the Controller betrayed a most singular curiosity, running from one thing to another, handling and scrutinizing every object which came within his observation. "I don't wonder," said he, as he surveyed the wonderful inventions for reducing manual labour which surrounded him,— "I don't wonder that this manor should be great above

all others. It deserves its character, and will doubtless, preserve it by its ingenuity, wealth, courage, and spirit of enterprise."

Could the reader minutely enter into the sentiments which just now occupied the bosom of Lady Longbonnet, he might probably discover some secret exultation arising there from the anticipation of her own fortune in reigning mistress of these wonders; as it is natural to suppose, that, well-inclined as she was to receive the suit of Narcissus, every thing which had a tendency to exalt the name of the manor of which she hoped soon to be the lady, must be more than agreeable to her feelings. Her heart coincided in all her brother's praises and delight long before her tongue gave utterance to her thoughts; and, during the whole of their progress

home, her mind was still so completely engrossed with the new and pleasing subject, that it was with some difficulty her brother could even draw a single monosyllable from her in answer to his questions. At length, however, guessing the cause of this most unusual taciturnity, he took pity upon her ; and, throwing himself back into the carriage, plunged himself into a deep reverie, and left her ladyship at full liberty and leisure to indulge her own thoughts without any kind of interruption.

CHAPTER VII.

Containeth a Conversation between Mother and Daughter.

THE Lady Charlotte had scarcely reached home from her morning visit to her father Narcissus, before her mother Germania arrived to spend a few hours in her society. A regulation existed which had so abridged the intercourse betwixt the mother and her child, that they were only allowed to be together at certain times, and for a given period, a restriction which had called forth the most cutting complaints from the Lady Charlotte and her mother, and had caused

a very great deal of anger against Narcissus ; in consequence of which he had found it expedient to allow of some few additional indulgencies, but they were only such as were extorted from his apprehensions, not voluntarily yielded by his affection. It was one of those privileged days on which Lady Charlotte had been sent for by her father, as related in a former chapter, from which interview she returned with more acrimony in her disposition than she had ever felt before this moment. A thousand times did she vow and protest not only never to marry young Orangegrass, but uniformly to refuse whomsoever her father should hereafter propose to her. "The proposition which I shall attend to," said she, "shall be that which comes from my mother: for I don't choose, not I, to be treated by that papa of mine as though I was not a bit better than a little child

in leading-strings. And then for him to go into such a downright passion because I wanted to tell him my dream! Fathers, forsooth, think their daughters not even worthy to be consulted about their own happiness, as though they were nothing more than animated dolls; incapable of thinking at all. Yet they don't behave worse to their daughters than their wives; and if my poor mother had a little of my spirit, I'll be hanged if she would be so badly off, and so hardly used as she is now. My father is a ———, but I'll torment him for it, that I will!"

She had just come to this pious and filial resolution when she reached her own door; and down she threw herself on the couch, and began to think and to vow and protest it all over again, with a vast number of additions; but, just as

she was in the middle of her soliloquy, her mother entered the apartment.—
“ My dear mother !” said Lady Charlotte, rushing into her arms, and bedewing her cheek with a tear, “ O my dear mother ! what a very nasty disagreeable man my father does get ! I declare, between you and me, that he is quite intolerable lately, and I don’t half like it, I assure you !”

“ How !” exclaimed Germania, in an accent of mingled surprize and regret—for Germania, notwithstanding the persecutions she had endured from Narcissus and his companions, still felt an affection for him, and could not even hear the censure of her daughter without feeling a strange emotion. “ How, my dear girl ? What has he done that you should thus suddenly throw off all filial affection for him, and speak of him

in such odious terms? Surely if he has used me ill, his misconduct extends not to you ; and if I have borne in silence the insults of a husband, you should learn to put up with the pettishness of a father."

Lady Charlotte looked abashed at this rebuke of her mother, and felt something very like anger rising in her bosom, for her high spirit could ill brook a check even from her whom most she loved on earth. Germania saw the conflict of anger and affection portrayed in the countenance of her child, and felt sorrow that she had said so much ; for she had no intention to wound the susceptible feelings of her from whom she expected all she now could hope for of earthly comfort. She hastened, therefore, to heal the wound she had made ; and, imprinting a kiss of conciliation on

the cheek of Lady Charlotte, without allowing her time to reply, she resumed, "Nay, my dearest Charlotte, I could not intend to hurt you. Forgive your mother, and banish the cloud which hovers about your fair forehead, my girl, and tell me what this thoughtless father of yours has been doing to displease you so very much." And as she said this, she playfully patted her daughter's cheek, and wiped away a rebellious tear, which, in spite of all Lady Charlotte's pride and endeavours to keep it in bounds, forced its way out of its habitation, and straggled down her cheek.

"My dear mother," replied she, after taking a few moments to recover herself, "It was all about that shabby Orangegrass. My father would insist upon my having him at once, and that no more time should be lost; and—and—and—"

“ And I suppose you spoke hastily to him,” returned Germania, “ and nettled him so much that he scolded you for it. Was that all, Charlotte? Never mind it then ; it is no unusual occurrence in life for father and daughter to have differences on the subject of matrimony. The former is generally too rash in his expectations, the latter sometimes, perhaps, more coy than wise.”

“ But I hope my dear mother does not mean to say that it is my case,” answered Lady Charlotte ; “ for the quarrel was not so much about Orangegrass as yourself. I like the fellow well enough ; and could I bring them all to my conditions, I should not hold out much longer, I dare say. But unless they will give up to me in what I have set my heart upon, I am determined, let my father say whatever he will, that I

will live single, and die an old maid, on purpose to put the succession to the manor out of the direct line in which he wishes it to flow! I am my mistress so far, and I will let him see it too!"

Germania scarcely heard the conclusion. No sooner did she hear that she was the cause of the quarrel, than the excess of her feelings overflowed at her eyes, and, had not Lady Charlotte been too much engrossed at the moment with her own feelings, she would have seen that the agitation of her mother prevented her from paying attention to her.—

As soon as she had ceased, however, she raised her eyes, and saw the distress she had occasioned. It was now the turn of the daughter to speak consolation to the parent; and so well did Lady Charlotte succeed in this office, that a smile gained the ascendancy in the fine count-

tenance of Germania, and banished the last relic of grief. "My dear girl," said she, straining her daughter affectionately to her bosom, "your value becomes every day more evident to me. You are my hope, my joy, my pride! Yet it grieves me that your defence of your unfortunate mother should thus subject you to the anger of your father! This is unnatural, and afflicting in the extreme."

"Oh, pray don't let it afflict you a bit," answered Lady Charlotte, assuming an air of indifference, "for, I assure you, while my father continues such an unreasonable man,—now don't frown, mother, for I will call him unreasonable until he behaves better to you; I say, while he continues such an unreasonable man, I would rather quarrel with him than not; for, I am sure it would give

me no pleasure for him to smile and look pleasant at me, while he turns his back on you."

"But, my dear Charlotte," returned Germania, "all your anger will not better my condition a tittle."

"My anger may not, mother; but when my good-for-nothing father sees that I will not marry Orangegrass without he acts more justly and kindly to you; and when he finds too that I will take your part in every thing against him, and will not do the things which he most wishes me to do, I'll warrant you, that bye and bye I will bring him to his senses."

"You are a good girl, Charlotte," replied Germania; "and if all daughters held their mother's happiness in as high

estimation as you do, how happy must every parent be, even in the midst of affliction! But now, come and tell me what this quarrel was about, for I have as yet, heard not one syllable of the particulars, and I am anxious to know whether I was the cause of it in the first instance, or if it originated from poor Orangegrass."

"Well then I will tell you, mother." Then drawing her mother close to her, Lady Charlotte began with the message she received from her father, desiring her to attend him, and went through the whole of the conversation which ensued including the dream, and her father's oath, when she came to which, she interwove a comment expressive of her dislike of his swearing, as derogatory to the dignity of a lord of a manor, and speculated on his having learned this

most *elegant* of all accomplishment from one of his favourite vassals who presided in one of the apartments of a neighbouring castle, to settle all matters in dispute between the tenants, and who was, therefore, called the knight justice. As soon as Lady Charlotte had concluded, her mother, tenderly embracing her, asked, "But does my dearest Charlotte really love this Orangegrave? because, if you do, I insist upon your not sacrificing your happiness for a point of mere etiquette; and my presence, although it would, of course, give me pleasure, would be considered nothing more. And then, as to your going to the Orange-land to reside, that would indeed rob me of my last joy; but they may, perhaps, be willing to relinquish this point."

"They shall relinquish all I ask, or I will not have him, my dear mother, and

that's *poz* ! As to my happiness, don't be uneasy about that. They can none of them injure that in any other way than by injuring you. I like Orange-graft well enough ; but, Lord bless you, mother, I am a young, rich, and, they say, good-looking girl enough, and I dare say I shall see plenty of young men that will please me better ; for, upon second thought, he is but a poor, ill-looking, half-grown sort of a chap, and I really do feel glad that I have found a tolerable excuse to shake him off, for I don't much like him, and that's true."

"Not like him, my dearest girl ! Then how is it that you have appeared to receive his suit with pleasure ? And what will you do in case he should concede every point you wish ? I tremble to think of it."

"Why, to be sure, mother," said La-

dy Charlotte, "if he were to do that, I might like him better, but he won't; for it was only yesterday that I asked him to be so kind as to tell my father that I would not marry on any other conditions than I have told you, and the uncivil brute had the impudence and the ill-manners to refuse me ! Before then I did like him tolerably well, but he refused to do what I desired, and if ever I give him the opportunity of refusing again, may Heaven——"

"Stop, child," interrupted Germania, "I will hear no vow on the subject, or you may one day wish it broken. They will re-consider the business, and though they pursue thy mother, it can ill serve their turn to persecute thee !"

At this moment a footman announced the arrival of the Controller and his

sister, to pay a visit of ceremony to the Lady Charlotte. "I wish to God they had chosen a more agreeable time for calling," exclaimed Lady Charlotte, embracing her mother, who immediately slipped out at an opposite door, stepped into her carriage, and drove off, happy, amidst all her sorrows, to find she had still a daughter who loved her.

CHAPTER VIII.

The visit of the Contrroller and Lady Longbonnet to Lady Charlotte—Another visit still more unexpected—A conference, with an unnatural issue.

THE Contrroller and his sister were not ignorant of the spirit of Lady Charlotte, Narcissus having informed them of the conversation which had taken place between her and himself on that morning ; and, as he had requested Lady Longbonnet to use her influence to bring back, as he was pleased to express himself, the audacious young Lady to

reason, this was not, strictly speaking, a visit only of ceremony, but one directed to the two-fold object of form and use. The Controller determined to accompany her ladyship, as he well knew etiquette required that he should not seem to neglect her who was the next heir to the manor. The Lady Charlotte, however, was not very kindly disposed to her visitors, because they had not paid their second visit to her mother, to whom, as the wife of the deputy lord, their second compliments were due. Her education, and the dignity of her sentiments and situation were sufficient guarantees against any pointed rudeness to them, although she inwardly felt severe vexation at the interruption of the pleasant *tête-à-tête* which had been occasioned by their coming.

• The forms and ceremonies of a first

interview are too uninteresting to amuse the reader, we will, therefore, omit the detail, contenting ourselves with an observation on its tendency and issue. The conversation was carried on with a great deal of coolness on the one side, and of distant respect on the other. The Lady Charlotte was anxious to introduce the subject of her mother, but she found no opportunity, as Lady Longbonnet said not a syllable on the theme which Narcissus had so particularly impressed upon her attention and interference, until she had taken leave and was leaving the room, when, squeezing the hand of Lady Charlotte, she whispered, "Oh, you cruel girl; you have broken the heart of your father and poor Orangegrass, and I must and will by some means bring about a reconciliation between you. It is really intolerable that the young man should be doomed to execution through

your unrelenting cruelty, and it shall not be so if I have any influence with you."

Lady Charlotte felt her cheeks glow with anger at the imperative manner in which Lady Longbonnet had presumed to address her, little dreaming what had passed between her Ladyship and her father, and of the probability which existed of herself being made, in some measure, subject to a step-mother. "My lady," she whispered in reply, "that which they have sought for they deserve, and that which they deserve they have received. My mind is irrevocably made up; and, young as I am, I will show my papa that I have at least as much stability as he." There was no time for reply from Lady Longbonnet; and as to the Controller, although he was near enough to overhear the whole

of the whispering colloquy, as it was doubtless intended that he should hear it, he did not presume to interfere, seeing, as he did, the utter uselessness of his interposition.

No sooner had she got rid of her visitors, than Lady Charlotte retired to her apartments overflowing with anger against her father, Orangegrass, and Lady Longbonnet. "Surely," said she to herself, "my father might have been contented with quarrelling with me himself without sending this strange woman to make herself a party in the business ! What had she to do with my inclinations or my resolutions ? I am not under her controul ! My father shall gain nothing by her interference, I am determined." Saying this, down she sat to her writing-desk, resolutely bent upon penning a severe sort of an

epistle both to papa, Orangeraft, and a certain vassal whom she shrewdly suspected to be at the bottom of all her father's ill temper, by having advised him to force Orangeraft down her throat ; and also from whom she suspected all her mother's persecutions to have flowed. This vassal was called originally *Blenkeneon*, although he had been honoured with a new title, in consequence of his blind attachment to the Lord of the manor, and the readiness he always displayed to do all his odd jobs, nor did it matter how dirty they were. This man was one of the principal advisers of Narcissus, and coupled with another vassal called *Eildown*, had led him to many of those acts of injustice and cruelty to his wife, of which she and the nation so loudly and so frequently complained. Against these two men in particular, the Lady Charlotte

felt a particular dislike, and lost no favourable opportunity of displaying her feeling.

Two or three times did she commence a letter to Orangegrass, and as often she tore it up in a fit of discontent, because it was either not sufficiently severe, or because it only partially expressed her feelings on the subject. She, at length, struck into a style which appeared more satisfactory to her, and had made a rapid progress in the letter, when Orangegrass, taking, for the last time, the advantage of the privilege which had been allowed him, entered the room without any ceremony or announcement, and, at once, broke the thread of Lady Charlotte's meditations.

"Ten thousand pardons, beloved Lady Charlotte," he exclaimed, as he

advanced towards the table; "let me hope——".

"Stand back, if you please, Sir," interrupted her ladyship: "have you lost your good manners as well as your gallantry? I only am to blame for this interruption; and it is a just punishment upon me for omitting to advise my domestics that I had thought proper to withdraw from you the privilege of a familiar intercourse."

"Am I then so wretched," returned Orangegrass, "that my very presence is regarded as a punishment? Heaven and earth! I resign, then, my happiness and my hopes to the wind, and cease to wish for aught except annihilation!"

"Most gallantly spoken, indeed!" said Lady Charlotte, smiling, as she

made reply, "what a pity that you should have brought all this upon yourself, by a refusal to perform a little act of gallantry for me. Your high spirit would not allow you to turn porter, so far as even to convey a message to my father, and now most romantically you try to win my forgiveness by a tissue of nonsense which means no more than a mere fillip of the finger!—No, sir; I am busy in writing, and have no time just now, to listen to romance; and when I am inclined, one of my maids shall read one to me."

"Do I live to become your sport and scorn?" vociferated Orangegrass: "are you not contented to overwhelm me with your unjust displeasure, but must you make me the mark of your ridicule?—What was it I refused? Nothing more or less than to carry my own rejection

to your father, to become the channel and vehicle of my own mortification!—Reconsider the matter, my dear Lady Charlotte, and do not let your anger outstrip the limits of discretion.”

This was adding fuel to the fire with a vengeance. Poor Orangegrass could not, out of all the dictionary of language, have selected a more unfortunate term than *discretion*. It kindled at once all the feelings of indignation and amazement in the bosom of Lady Charlotte.—For a moment she gazed on her infatuated but impolitic lover, and then, pointing to the door, exclaimed, in a tone of unusual firmness, “Begone, Sir! leave my house!—Discretion, indeed! Have I entrusted my discretion to your management? Have I empowered you to call me to account for my actions, or to exercise your own

judgment relative to the operation of mine? Go, go! you had better return home, and get a few lessons of prudence and politeness before you strive again to win the heart of a female! It must be a poor, unfledged, inexperienced, and weak fly, too, which can be caught in your cabweb. Good morning to you, Sir! I dare say you can find your way to the street-door."

Orangegrass, however, was not thus easily repulsed. He was aware, that if he missed the opportunity now before him, it might never be repeated. Therefore following Lady Charlotte across the room, he dropped on his knee, and, seizing her hand, attempted to press it to his lips, but she angrily withdrew it from him, and assuming all the forbidding disgust which she so well knew how to throw into her looks, exclaimed,

"In my house, Sir, I ought at least to be allowed the power of controul. Your presence, Sir, is disagreeable; not because you are personally so to me: you have offended me in the tenderest of my feelings, by refusing a compliance with my desire relative to my mother; and thus, Sir, you have alienated from yourself the good opinion I had previously entertained of you. Henceforth we must be strangers!"

"Allow me to recant what I have uttered on that subject," exclaimed Orangegrass, "and I will promise to fulfil every wish of your heart. Consent but to go with me for a fortnight, and I will return and reside in Fever-isle with you."

"And this you will engage in the proper form? And you will also bind

yourself to give me unrestrained intercourse with my mother? Are these your intentions? Is it this you would say?"

Orangecraft, for a moment, was silent. "I will give you my word to return with you in the specified time!"

Lady Charlotte saw the extent of the concession. Her penetration discovered the direct negative which he thus put on her questions; and, indignant at him for duplicity, and at herself for her simplicity and credulity, she immediately walked hastily to the bell-rope, and, pulling it violently, desired the attendant who entered to show Orangecraft to the door, and to see that he was no more admitted without a previous announcement; and, without allowing time for any reply, instantly opened a

private door, and retired into an adjoining apartment, leaving Orangegrass in a state of mind more easy to be felt than described. He had calculated upon an easy reconciliation; and therefore, as soon as Narcissus had informed him of the sentiments she had disclosed in the morning, he determined to see her, and to win back her good humour by fair promises of obedience to her will; although it was his own fixed will, as well as the sincere desire of her father, that she should be carried into another manor, in order that the separation betwixt her mother and her should be final. Full of confidence in his own power over Lady Charlotte, therefore, the young lover made his entrance into her apartment; and so great was the shock he experienced from the overthrow of the superstructure of hope which he had reared, that he could scarcely collect his

scattered thoughts sufficiently to make his way out of the house, and to reach his own residence.

In the mean time, Lady Charlotte, left to herself, became a prey to violent agitation ; for, so greatly had her feelings been exercised during the last interview that she could scarcely endure the lassitude of mind which ensued.— She threw herself for some moments on the couch, and a flood of tears, coming to her relief, tended, in no slight degree, to her recovery. Again she took up the letter she had commenced, and endeavoured to proceed ; but, after several ineffectual attempts, she determined not to plague herself about it to-day. “ One day,” said she, “ will not alter the situation of affairs ; and to-morrow I shall be better fitted for the task !” And saying this, she rang

the bell, ordered her landau and her governess, and sallied forth into the park to derive from the fresh breeze an invigoration of her spirits.

CHAPTER IX.

Narcissus consulteth with himself, and then with his advisers—and points out a plan to get rid of his wife—He picks a quarrel with conscience.

RANK and wealth are not uniformly the introducers of happiness to the human species. Narcissus, though the lord of a manor which contained a prodigious number of vassals, and a still more uncommon quantity of wealth, was at this moment the victim of contending emotions. The chief cause of his uneasiness was his own situation with respect to his wife, of whom he would have given half his manor to have been fairly ridden, so anxious was his desire

to enter into a connexion with Lady Longbonnet, whose charms and vivacity, and influence, and her *tout ensemble*, indeed, had excited a strong wish within him never to be separated from her, at least, until she had communicated to him all the pleasure she might have the power to bestow. Next in importance came the affair of Orange-graft and his daughter Lady Charlotte, whose conduct to him had mortified him exceedingly, and whose refusal to accept the hand of her lover, except upon such conditions as he could not consent to, had ruffled his temper most prodigiously. He knew, however, that the young man was gone to see her, and he trusted that this interview would not fail to lead to a happy termination of their differences: and thus he satisfied himself pretty well on this point, and anticipated that this troublesome bu-

siness would very soon be taken off his hands.

But now for his wife. He wished from his soul, as thousands of his vassals did in their's, no doubt, to get rid of this torment, which stood in the way of his views and his enjoyments. The matter would have been easy enough if the public had not so impudently interfered and made her cause their own. Many charges, there cannot be a doubt, are cooked up every day, and supported in common life ; but here the eyes of all his vassals were on their lord, and on her whom he had unfortunately given them for their lady ; and he found the ground so delicate, that he hardly dared to set one foot before the other, in the way of thrusting her entirely away. To assist his reflections on this knotty case, he had sent for his two favourite vassals,

Blenkinson and Eildown, on whose suggestions he relied for an extrication from the dilemma in which he found himself. Whatever they might advise, he determined to abide by, as he was pretty well aware, that they would not recommend any thing very ungrateful to his feelings. He had, however, prepared as good a case as he could to convince their judgments in his favour, in case he should find them at all wavering or reluctant to pursue the course he wished them.— Amongst a parcel of old musty records, in his father's library, he had found two or three reports respecting the marriage of one of the former lords of the manor, who married successively seven or eight wives, not troubling himself about the legality or illegality of the measure, until he found how he could like the lady, and then, by means of his influence, prevailed upon the proper autho-

rities, to come to such a decision as was agreeable to his wishes. These reports, which exactly coincided with his own desires, he carefully perused, and obliterated every passage which, by any stretch of ingenuity, could possibly be warped against him, and strengthened it with all the arguments which his own invention could furnish. He was anxious to avoid giving unnecessary offence to his vassals, as they had sadly treated his eyes the three or four most recent journies he had taken through the chief town, and in other parts of the manor; and he did, perhaps, (although on this subject we have no other authority than our own loose surmises) apprehend that they might proceed to still more outrageous acts of violence against his person, which was "a consummation devoutly to be shunned."

While Narcissus was thus resolving matters in his mind, his two vassals, on whom he intended to confide for the successful termination of this business, arrived; and Narcissus immediately entered upon the explanation of his feelings for the Lady Longbonnet, and his wishes relative to the steps he might take for his entire liberation from his wife.

"In truth, my lord," said Blenkinson, "we have considered this business before, many a time and oft, and set in deliberation from noon to owl-light, from owl-light to the dreary hour when the yawning grave vomits forth its sheeted phantoms, and still continued when the morning cock has crowed them all back again to their tombs; and I really don't see, my lord, that we are one bit the nearer the desired end than we were when we began. If death would but en-

ter into a treaty of alliance, offensive and defensive, with us, and give Germania a friendly blow under the fifth rib, then, my lord, we should all be preserved from a very great deal of private uneasiness and public displeasure."

"What is the use of *talking* of death?" said Eildown. "Would that we had a little more power, and that we could find out any mode of keeping quiet the tongues of these saucy vassals of your's, my lord! Like the old lord who had his variety of wives, you might also marry whomsoever you please, but I am fearful the council of vassals might not readily be brought into the sanction of our plan, and then, you know, my lord, we had much better have been doing nothing at all."

"But we must and will do something;

and something to the purpose too!" impatiently cried Narcissus: and, as he spoke, a furious kind of expression flashed from his eyes, which convinced his vassals that he spoke not without meaning what he said; and that his mind was wrought up to some very desperate purpose.

"What has your lordship thought of?" replied the two vassals at the same moment, half dead with terror. For these two men held high situations, from which they derived a great deal of profit, independent of the honour and influence which were attached to their distinguished offices; and whenever they saw that Narcissus was agitated with passion, or that in any of their actions they had not sufficiently studied his approbation, they always trembled, lest, in a paroxysm of indignation or disap-

pointment, he should expel them both from the responsible and distinguished stations they filled. Such were the apprehensions which took possession of their breasts at this moment; and these feelings fluctuated, rising and falling as they marked the alternations of feeling which distorted the physiognomy of the agitated Narcissus. At length, these emotions subsided, and lapsed into a paleness of countenance the most ghastly, while his eye "in a fine frenzy rolling," rested, after some little perambulation round the room, upon the terrified vassals. "Hark ye," said he, in a tone of firmness, "there is a mode, and you must adopt it; I have set my heart upon the issue, and upon your heads will I revenge a failure. Our laws assert that I can do no wrong; therefore the censure will rest on your heads alone; and you should have gratitude and cou-

rage enough to risk the consequences.—
I have braved the disapprobation of my
vassals for your sakes, keeping you in
my confidence when every other back
was turned upon you, and holding you
up amidst the storm which assailed you,
till its fury was spent, and now I expect
a suitable return from you. See then
that I do not expect in vain.”

Blenkinson bowed lowly to the ground,
as he replied to this startling mandate,
which was sufficiently intelligible to ex-
cite a stronger terror than ever before
assailed him, or any of his colleagues.—
“Mighty lord,” said he, “your vassals
are at your command; and desire of them
whatever pleases you, and be assured,
your wish is imperative. We will un-
dertake to lay this matter before the
council of vassals after we shall have
duly weighed the best mode, and our

whole influence shall be exerted to obtain that termination which is most desirable to my lord. Therefore, let my lord be happy."

"And dost thou imagine, cold-blooded vassal," returned Narcissus, "that I can waste my time, and put a bridle on all my passions, and check the boisterous torrent of my blood? Your decisions must be prompt as my desires, and your measures must outstrip the speed of time. Let me hear of no delays, no adjournments, no re-considerations; summon your colleagues, and let me know the result of your deliberations before twenty hours shall have made my demand stale."

To which Eildown answered with great sagacity, perspicuity, and deliberation, for Eildown was notorious for the

length of time which he took to make up his mind even on the most trifling subjects ; “ Sir, this is a very grave matter, and requireth grave consideration, and let me hope and intreat that you will not endeavour to bring us into any indecency of decision, since that would be to excite suspicions in the minds of your vassals, which must prove injurious to your fame as well as ours. I will canvass the opinions of all the great vassals on the subject, and try my influence privately before I attempt to carry any public question, so as to place success beyond the reach of doubt or speculation. We had better, my lord, spend some time in preparing a strong foundation, that our edifice may not afterwards be liable to destruction from any storm which may assail it.”

Narcissus was little accustomed to the

postponement of his wishes, but there was no alternative in this case. He must either consent to a little necessary, and decent delay, or fly directly in the face of his advisers, and to this he was well aware they would not submit, having all the responsibility of his conduct resting on their own shoulders. He, therefore, following the example of other individuals as illustrious as himself, made a virtue of necessity, condescended to move down the stream which he had vainly attempted to stem, and very wisely chose the only alternative left him. He consequently dismissed his vassals, with a pointed desire that they would not procrastinate that which might be done to-day, and to consider that his feelings were very susceptible, and that they had taken into their hands his happiness, for the purpose of protecting and nourishing it. He concluded with very

splendid promises of future favour, in the event of their success, and the latter part of his harangue made a much deeper impression on the minds of these parasites than any other part; an effect which was well judged and anticipated by Narcissus, who knew sufficient of human nature to be acquainted with the surest key to unlock their services. This key was in his possession, and hitherto, in all instances in which he tried it, he had discovered amongst its other virtues, that it was infallible in its results,

Left to himself, Narcissus began to talk a little to his conscience, which chanced rather impertinently to ask him, what this wife of his had ever done to induce him thus unreluctantly to pursue her. He could not, with all his ingenuity, parry this very home-thrust; but, after much equivocation, and many in-

effectual attempts to find out something like a specious reply, he was obliged to give up the task, and to whistle a tune to himself, by way of evading the subject. Conscience, however, which had lain quiet for some years, determined, since it had found its voice again, not to be put off thus ; therefore, raising its tone, it still more loudly repeated the question ; and Narcissus, finding neither whistling, nor dancing, nor singing, would put an end to the discourse, put on an air of boldness, and declared, that he knew not any thing she had done, except that she had, like another female in an earlier period of the world, whose afflictions were recorded, “ outlived his liking,” and that he was determined to have another. Conscience then asked him if he was not a ——— ; Narcissus flew in a passion, and endeavoured to put down the saucy interrogator with a

frown and a threat, which unfortunately produced an effect diametrically opposite to that which he expected and hoped for ; since conscience, offended at such treatment, instantly began to ring such a peal in his ears, that, in order to gain something like a momentary return of repose and happiness, the terrified Narcissus seized a bottle full of a powerful cordial which stood near him, and, raising it to his mouth, swallowed the whole of its contents, and fell senseless on the floor.

CHAPTER X.

*The Reflections of Germania—Welcome Visitors—
New Characters—Hopes, doubts, and fears—
Adopted Child—Lady Charlotte's significant
present—Departure of Visitors.*

THE unfortunate Germania, after the interview with her daughter, returned home, brooding over the information she had just derived from Lady Charlotte. It appeared then there was no hope of the restoration of her rights left to her—no hope of a reconciliation; she was condemned, without conviction of offence, to pine out her days in solitude and obscurity, a widowed wife, a child-

less mother ; the sympathies of those whose duty it was to condole with and support her, were dried up towards her, and she was left to bear her wretchedness alone ; yet not alone, for Heaven, that protects innocence and watches over virtue, was with her to strengthen her fortitude and to guide her footsteps.— Yet, greatly as she was gifted with patience and with fortitude, she could not survey the long and dreary prospect which existence presented to her without feeling some emotions of an affecting description ; without calling to her mind the portraits of former days, and shrinking, in sorrowful apprehension, from the gloomy shadows of the future. While she was engaged in this melancholy train of reflections, the current of her thoughts were interrupted by the sudden entrance of two vessels, who were her advisers and friends at all mo-

ments of doubt and perplexity, and whose faithful adherence to her, amidst all her troubles, had won them the universal esteem of their fellow-vassals. As we have not introduced these characters to our reader, we will attempt to delineate for his information an outline which may make him more familiar with them.

Brownloaf was a man of considerable talents, an unusual share of integrity, and an unconquerable spirit. He had for a series of years resolutely opposed the conduct of those vassals who possessed the confidence of the old Lord, and subsequently of Narcissus. He had frequent opportunities of rising to great favour and power if he had chosen to be linked into a line of conduct opposite to that which he had uniformly pursued.—Overtures had oftentimes been made to allure him away from his accustomed

practice of investigating measures, and of finding fault with every thing which appeared to militate against the true interests of the manor ; but his steady rejection of the most splendid offers, and his pertinacious fidelity to the welfare of the interests of Germania, and of her daughter, in opposition to the desire and will of Narcissus, had made him a still greater favourite with all the tenants of the manor, except those who blindly worshipped the lord and his advisers.— Germania had found this vassal extremely useful to her, as he would continually annoy her enemies, by trumpeting forth her virtues, and loudly impeaching the conduct of all those who had so wantonly and maliciously persecuted her.

Broggam was a lawyer, very keen : very well read, and of much practice and repute ; who was withal a very honest

man, and thus proved a valuable singularity in the character of the profession. Being well acquainted with the code by which the manor was governed, he was an extremely serviceable reference in all matters of delicacy. He was a great thorn in the side of Narcissus and all his favourite tenants ; for he would not condescend to court greatness, nor was he to be won by courtesy. He adopted the cause of Germania, because it was the cause of innocence and virtue, and female weakness against malignity and wickedness, and power ; and his rapid growth in public favour was the reward of his integrity and constancy.

Such were the two vassals who came thus opportunely to give their countenance and advice to Germania in this moment of her distress. " I could have

borne the slights of Narcissus," said she, as she concluded the narrative of the events which she had witnessed, "but the desire and design to rob me of my child, to send her to a foreign land, and to teach her to forget all those filial feelings, the exercise of which has hitherto constituted my chief delight—this stroke will be too much for me ; for although she has had spirit enough to resist the attempt in the first instance, yet when I consider the tenderness of her years, and the infancy of her resolution, and the perseverance of Narcissus, when bent on the attainment of any favourite object, I cannot but feel the most lively apprehensions that she will, ere long, be torn from her disconsolate mother."

"Fear nothing, madam," replied Broggam ; "the universal voice of the manor is in favour of you and your daughter."

ter ; and Narcissus, little as he regards that voice on common occasions, will never venture to oppose it in this instance. It is too loud, too determined ; and, added to it, the council of vassals will surely never allow such an arbitrary mode of proceeding.

“ Poh, nonsense, Broggam,” exclaimed Brownloaf : “ Narcissus heeds not the voice of the vassals where it strikes at his pleasures ; and as to the council you talk of, we have too much experience of their devotion to him.”

“ A moment stop, before you pronounce such severity of censure on that august body, which has hitherto shown itself so friendly to me,” replied the distressed Germania : “ I cannot, will not despair, that there is sufficient virtue resident there to prevent any very vio-

lent act of hostility to a mother's feelings! Would you persuade me that nature has no influence over them?"

"I hope it will prove as you wish," said Brownloaf, shrugging up his shoulders with an air of incredulity, "but I cannot shake off the strong doubts I feel on the subject. Have you not marked, whenever I have alluded to your case before this council, the irresolution which has characterized their conduct, or, what is still worse, the lukewarmness which they have displayed towards your interest?"

Germania sighed an affirmative reply; and Brownloaf resumed—"But, madam, the purport of our visit is of a different description. Report has told us that Narcissus has made proposals to this Lady Longbonnet, and that these pro-

posals, having been met with a kindred disposition, will be followed by other measures which will intimately affect your honour and the public interests."

"How!" exclaimed Germania, with the excess of dismay and anguish strongly painted on her countenance.

Brownloaf continued—"It is not unreasonable to expect that some attempt will be made to influence the council of vassals to liberate him from the ties which bind him to you; and to effect this nothing will be left undone, perchance, since, otherwise, it would be impossible for him legally to carry the purposes he has in view into effect.—These are merely the surmises of my own brain."

"And," exclaimed the pale and trem-

bling Germania, who had scarce power left to give utterance to her words,—
“can you believe that this council would consent, merely out of their blind devotion to Narcissus, to infix a mortal stab in the honour of his wife?”

“I trust not,” said Breggan, who was anxious to sooth the feelings of the agitated Germania, into something like tranquillity.—“I trust that moment will never be witnessed by me, when the Fever-islanders will so far forget the duty and loyal affection they profess towards you, as to consent to a measure of such dishonour, unless some strong ground could be made out for the proceeding.”

“And perhaps this may be attempted,” said Brownloaf—“for we know well what temptations and singular times we live in. I still feel no wonder at any

measures which may be adopted, not by Narcissus, since the laws of the manor have declared that the lord can do no wrong, but by his advisers, who only think of ingratiating themselves in his favour, to remove every impediment which may present any thing like a serious opposition to the views which he has foolishly begun to entertain."

"Heavens!" exclaimed Germania—"what will become of me? Oh! my father, thou who didst shed thy blood in contending against the enemies of this manor, and didst bequeath me to the affections of my husband, look down and protect me!"

"Aye, madam," said Brownleaf, "it is true that Narcissus fulfils the sacred obligation which your illustrious father imposed upon him! It is thus that he

discharges the debt of gratitude which he contracted when that venerable warrior gave your happiness into his keeping, and added his dying charge, that he should duly appreciate the value of the gift ! But, re-assure yourself, madam, with the conviction that you have friends, who though their power to defend may be weak, will resolutely sound your wrongs throughout the boundaries of the manor, and excite the vassals to entrench themselves around you, with a determination to hurl back upon your foes all the shafts which their malignity may level against you !”

Germania gratefully took the hand of Brownloaf, and with a silent expression of feeling which defied all oral sounds, gave the most eloquent utterance to the thanks which were too powerful for words. For some minutes which suc-

ceeded, all was pantomime, a mere colloquy of gesticulation; not a syllable was suffered to intrude itself, until the tongue of a lively little boy, who was a *protégé* of Germania, and who at that moment rushed into the room, suddenly interrupted the silent rhetoric in which the whole trio were exercising themselves. The presence of this young gentleman was rather *mal à propos*, since he had most innocently been the cause of much of the dispute which occasioned the separation of Narcissus and Germania, at least, if we may be allowed to pay credit to the most probable and best authenticated rumours of the day on the subject. His presence, therefore, was but ill calculated to compose the flurried feelings of Germania.

“Oh, mama!” said he, running up to Germania, “Lady Charlotte has just

sent me a beautiful small sword, and desires me to learn to use it immediately, that I may one day know how to defend you, if there should be occasion for it.— Was it not strange, mama, that she should send it to me now? Did she ever tell you that she should send me a sword, mama?”

“No, my dear,” returned Germania, colouring and sighing still more deeply as she spoke. “No, no! it is a dangerous weapon, and she was a foolish girl to send it to you. It may do you an injury; and, as to myself, I trust I shall outlive persecution, without allowing thee to draw a sword in my behalf. I love not such arguments, my boy; let guilty vice entrench itself behind the sword; it is a libel on the world that innocence and virtue should be compelled to fly to such resources. Lay it by, my

dear ; it were better that you should be ignorant of its use than be endangered by an association with it.

“ But Lady Charlotte has sent it to me,” said he, “ and I must be taught, mama : besides, if these wicked men should continue to pursue you, you will want some better protector than your innocence and virtue ; and when I grow large enough, and get an arm strong enough, mama, you shall see that Lady Charlotte did not send me the sword for nothing. I’ll warrant you, that I would find some way to revenge the insults which the naughty men have put upon you ! ”

“ Well said, my little hero ! ” said Broggam, “ and thou shalt have a sword, and I’ll be sworn that thou wilt not use

it to disgrace thyself nor thy friends—
Let me intercede for him.”

“And me,” added Brownloaf, “for I see in the youth the dawning of a spirit which may one day range itself betwixt you and your enemies. He is a gallant boy, and will one day compensate you for your sufferings.”

The youngster was equipped with the sword forthwith, and danced out of the room overjoyed with his new acquisition. “That boy,” said Germania, “has caused much sorrow ; I fear that he will still occasion me more affliction than happiness ; yet I have adopted him, and envy shall never wrest him from me.—But tell me, my friends, what can I do to prevent the banishment of my daughter ?”

“You may not stir in it at present,

madam," said Broggam : " content yourself with merely laying the simple facts before the tenantry, and leave the vassals to their own comments, which, be assured, will not be unfavourable to your wishes nor interests. I have no fears for the result. I rely with confidence on the unchanging spirit and perseverance of Lady Charlotte ; she will not be warped by the influence of others, nor altered by time. There will be no occasion for swords, nor hostilities of a more active nature than those we have already encountered. Your own virtues, madam, have made you popular, and your popularity will deter those from pursuing you too far, who would willingly hunt you to destruction."

" I trust, Broggam," said Brownlow, " that your hopes will all be realised ; although, for my part, I cannot see that

easy termination which your fancy pictures. I think as highly of the Lady Charlotte as you do; but I take into consideration her age likewise: she is young and undetermined as to her future life; and youth and irresolution are bad qualifications under her present circumstances, when she has need of such opposite qualities."

Germania smiled, and thanked her friends for the new confidence with which they had inspired her; a confidence which again led forth her hopes into action, and taught her to look forward to a futurity more cheering than the past had promised to her: and the early departure of her friends left her soon at liberty to indulge more freely, in retirement, in the anticipation of those fancied pleasures which are, in fact, nothing better than the absence of pain.—

Yet this kind of *negative* enjoyment to her was equal to *positive* joy, after the long season of suffering, of persecution, and of wretchedness, which her enemies had prepared for her. She had been so long inured to affliction, that a moment of repose was a moment of extacy ; and although in the future she could contemplate nothing beyond a relaxation of persecution, even this prospect was grateful to her eye as the most exuberant felicities are to the voluptuary in bliss. The principal foundation of her hopes were the spirit, and energy, and filial constancy, displayed by Lady Charlotte, from which, on mature reflection, she could not refrain from deducing the most happy promises of still greater exertions hereafter. This lovely daughter appeared to the deserted mother as a guardian angel sent from Heaven to sympathise with her and protect her, to step betwixt her and the darts of malignity,

and to work ultimately her triumph over oppression. Gratified with the enlivening picture which her imagination had sketched, the hapless Germania was, for the moment, diverted from the contemplation of her real situation, from dwelling too intensely upon the actual troubles which surrounded her, and from estimating the probable measures which the friends of Narcissus might advise him to adopt; and she succeeded in weaving for herself a garland of happiness from the flowers which her fancy had culled and gathered out of life's thorny way! Happy moment of forgetfulness! Accursed be the hand that would rob injured virtue of this her sole consolation!

END OF VOL. I.

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A
MONTH IN TOWN;

A Satirical Poem.

BY
HUMPHREY HEDGEHOG, Esq.

AUTHOR OF
“THE GENERAL-POST BAG,” “REJECTED ODES,”
&c. &c. &c.

“VELUTI IN SPECULUM.”

IN THREE VOLUMES.

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A

MONTH IN TOWN.

CHAPTER XX.

The Author introduceth his Reader to a Gaming House—Rouge et Noir—Sharpers—Detection—Singular Punishment—Scarmouth—His Perplexity and Extrication from the Dilemma.

“Do you play at *Rouge et Noir*?” said Bull-dog to Scarmouth, as they jogged arm in arm to a certain very celebrated house of play, not above a hun-

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B

dred yards from the castle which had been appointed for the residence of the former.

But who is this Scarmouth?—methinks the reader will ask. Gentle reader, he was a vassal in high favour with Narcissus, not because he was a man of capacious intellect, nor of splendid acquirements, nor of tried virtue. No, reader, if thou hast formed such an opinion of the character of the companions of Narcissus, thou hast profited little by the sketches given of him in the former volume. Scarmouth was a man who could drink his eight or nine bottles of wine, and continue good company to the end of them; who could talk smutty, sing a tolerable song, laugh at the wit of Narcissus, and pander for him when required; who had more froth in his composition than substance, and had no objection to

lose a game at hazard occasionally, to put his patron in good humour. He was, withal, a man who could fawn and flatter to perfection, and who had a happy knack of dressing up even the vices of his lord in such virtuous habits, as to make them pass current with strangers for that which they imported to be. Such a man was Scarmouth, reader! and such a one, be assured, was no inconsiderable acquisition to the social circle of Narcissus: there, indeed, he reigned predominant; was the soul of the company, and the echo of Narcissus on all occasions, and his health was usually drunk with very great ceremony and applause.

And now, having satisfied thee, reader, respecting the qualifications of Scarmouth, it may be well to give thee some insight into his lineage. He was the

son of a very distinguished vassal, whose wife, as rumour stated, had found favor in the eyes of Narcissus, insomuch that he entrusted her with all the secrets respecting the manor, and advised with her on all momentous occasions, and gave her much interest and wealth; and scandal hath gone so far as to say, that certain familiarities passed between them, at which her husband connived, because his interest prompted him to close his eyes to circumstances which could not fail to turn to ultimate profit—Nor was he deceived in his conjectures, since his wife took special care to make ample provision for her husband and Scarmouth, and all her relations and connections, and to manage matters so cleverly, that nothing was done respecting the manor which did not meet with her entire concurrence.

"Do you play at *Rouge et Noir*?"—asked Bull-dog, looking rather anxiously at Scarmouth for his reply.

"No," returned Scarmouth, "I never practised it much!" Bull-dog's countenance was overclouded in a moment, for it was a game to which he was unusually attached, and at which he had whiled away many a long and dreary night in his native manor; and the old warrior had always recorded it amongst his favorite maxims, "never refuse a battle nor a game at *Rouge et Noir*!"

"No," reiterated Scarmouth, "not exactly at *Rouge et Noir*: but I play at hazard, which will do just as well, perhaps; for you must know hazard."

Bull-dog, however, shook his head, to signify that he was ignorant of the

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game ; on which Scarmouth, who could not bear the idea of suffering a pigeon to pass by him without plucking him, resumed, " I think, after a game or two, I might, perhaps, manage it."

The countenance of the veteran brightened up as the grateful sound reached his ears ; for he would as soon have relinquished the enjoyment of his pipe as the prospect of his favourite game.— " 'Tis very easy," said he, " you cannot fail to learn it."

" I'll play you for fifty pounds," said Scarmouth ; " my ignorance against your skill, my worthy old cock, though sure to lose."

" Done !" said Bull-dog ; " though I think it rather unfair, if, as you say, you know nothing of the game."

Scarmouth, however, was determined ; and in a few minutes they were seated at a card table. "Humph !" said Bull-dog, when the first game was pretty nearly half over, "I thought you knew nothing at all about this game, my friend !"

"I had forgot it," returned Scarmouth, "but now I recollect I used to play it at Paris ; never could do much at it, however ; generally took care to get pretty well beat, and to come off eight or nine hundred, or a thousand pounds minus."

"'Tis *your* game," said Bull-dog, throwing down the cards ; "I have either played d—d ill, or you very excellently. I must try better the next time ; for a *beating* is not what I am accustomed to. Done again for another fifty !"

"Done!" replied Scarmouth; "a little luck gives me more confidence. I used generally though to win the first game."

"D—m—tion!" exclaimed Bull-dog, examining his cards, "you will win the second, also, if I get no better cards than these. I am not accustomed to hold such. Surely you have bewitched away my luck, for never was such a change!"

Scarmouth won the second game; and Bull-dog, enraged at his ill luck, doubled the stakes; when fortune, changing sides, gave him the victory, and continued, with very little variation, faithful to him through the whole of the evening; till Scarmouth, finding himself minus about fifteen hundred pounds, swore a tremendous oath, and rose from the table, declaring he would try no more;

"I vill take a hand vid you, Monsieur," said a *petit-maitre* of a neighbouring manor, stepping across the room as soon as he saw Scarmouth's seat vacant. "I should vish to say dat I played von game vid de greatest general in all de world. *Permettez-moi, Monsieur ?*"

"I don't mind á game, friend," returned Bull-dog; and down the combatants sat. "What do you play for?"

"Vhat you please, good sir. A louis-d'or *s'il vous plait*; or, if dat be too much, a single livre, or a dozen francs!"

"A dozen devils!" exclaimed Bull-dog, looking at the foreign vassal sternly; "I'll play for nothing less than fifty pounds to night!"

“Misericorde! Misericorde!” roared his challenger, trembling at the piercing look of his opponent—“fifty pounds! why, pon my honour, mighty General, I have not the means to spare so much money, for if I lose my all, how can I get back to my native place.”

“Can you play the game at all?” asked Scarmouth, who felt a hope that, through the stranger, perhaps, he might recover his loss.

“Begar, monsieur, I vas accounted de best player in de Rue d’Angleterre last season, and I think I can play a good game now.”

“Then done, for fifty pounds, for you, my boy!” cried Scarmouth: “for, d——n me, I’ll risk the stake, and if you are pretty successful you shall share the

profits with me. What say you, my hearty cock ; if you are agreeable, play on, and mind your *hits*."

"You are a generous gentleman," cried the stranger—"I will do my best to beat dis grand general !" So saying, at it they went. Fortune, however, gave Bull-dog the game, after a close struggle, which showed that his antagonist was no bungler at the science.

"Well done, my lad," said Scarmouth—"though fortune has been a bitch to you this time, you deserved better, and I'll back you again."

The next game was the foreigner's. A third, fourth, and fifth were the same. "Allow me to use my own cards?" asked Bull-dog. It was not customary, but Scarmouth replied, that as Bull-dog was

a man of honour, the request should be complied with. The cards were accordingly changed and examined, but fortune continued the same. At midnight, Bull-dog found that he had refunded all his winnings and was more than five hundred pounds out of pocket. "I'll play no more to-night," said he pettishly — "I'll meet you here to-morrow."

The challenge was accepted, and Scarmouth promised to be of the party. As Bull-dog returned home, however, he began to feel some doubts rising in his mind as to the fairness with which his opponent had played, and these suspicions increased prodigiously when he called to mind several circumstances which had escaped him at the moment, but which tended greatly to corroborate his opinion that he had been in the hands of a sharper. But

even this idea was more tolerable than the impression that he was fairly beat. "D——n me !" said the veteran, laying his hand on the hilt of his sword—"but I'll cut off the rascal's ears, if I find my suspicions confirmed to morrow ; and as for Scarmouth——" At this moment the rank of Scarmouth flashed across his mind. He was the companion of Narcissus. It was therefore impossible that Scarmouth could know any thing at all about the stranger's character, if he was a sharper, or he could never have joined in a scheme to fleece his patron's guest.

True to his appointment, on the following evening, Bull-dog repaired to the rendezvous, where he found his antagonist ready to receive him, and in a few minutes afterwards Scarmouth arrived, but declined depositing any more stakes.

—"No," said he, "my friend, you can afford to stake for yourself out of last night's winnings. I have no objection to make a bet or two, now and then, when I feel inclined."

The combatants sat down. Fortune, although favourable at first to Bull-dog, soon turned sides, and stuck so close to the side of the stranger, that by midnight again he had pocketed as many thousands as he had hundreds the evening before. "Another game for a hundred," cried Bull-dog.

"Agreed," was the answer ; and the game was going, as usual, against Bull-dog, when stooping suddenly, as though to pick up his handkerchief, the veteran popped his head under the table, and saw a pack of cards lying in the lap of his opponent. He took no notice, but

waited an opportunity of detecting the cheat, and it soon occurred ; for no sooner were Bull-dog's eyes open to the fraud than he obtained a remarkable addition to his penetration ; so that not a movement of his adversary's fingers escaped his notice. In a moment or two, his adversary's right hand dropped into his lap. Bull-dog marked its instantaneous return, and challenged the player with an unfair act. The sharper coloured, seemed indignant, and repulsed the charge vehemently. The veteran, however, coolly drawing his sword, swore to extort a confession, though it was from his heart's blood. Such a menace, and from such a character, could not fail of making an adequate impression on the feelings of its object. The trembling sharper, turning infinitely more pale than before, hesitated and stammered with all the signs of guilty ap-

prehension, while Scarmouth himself, who had picked up about eight thousand pounds by bets, reddened and fain would have rushed out of the room to conceal his confusion, could he have done so with any tolerable grace; but he was well acquainted with most of the company, and although he might probably be aware that his *honourable* conduct was pretty well impressed upon their minds, or, in other words, without adopting any irony of expression, seeing that his fellow gamblers were *down* upon him, having their suspicions broad awake, he knew it would not do for him to take himself off at such a critical moment, if he had any kind of regard for appearances. In order, therefore, completely to deceive the less wary, he resolved to join Bull-dog against the poor foreigner; and accordingly proceeded to collar the cheat, and to shake him most

unmercifully, vociferating for a summary and instantaneous punishment on the guilty rascal, and recommending that he should be pinned by the ears to the wainscot of the room, until the next evening.

The poor fellow sweated from head to foot, at the idea of his ignominy and pain, and implored Scarmouth not to think of visiting him with such a severe retribution, but to think of the gain he himself had made by his exertions, and to be accordingly merciful in his decision. This was a bad string to touch upon for the impolitic sharper, since it brought down upon Scarmouth all those who had lost money to him, and who now, in no very gentle terms, insisted that he should refund his winnings: the opinion ran so strongly against him that he found it impossible

to resist it, and was compelled to agree to a measure which went sorely against his inclination. He inwardly swore, however, to have his revenge out of the sharper ; for to do justice to Scarmouth, ready as he might have been to connect himself with the cheat, had he been privy to his *profession* in the outset, he really was not connected with him, although a very little observation of his play had convinced him that the stranger understood all the tricks of the fraudulent art to perfection, and therefore it was that he adventured his money with so much confidence.

Scarmouth, the more the sharper intreated, only vociferated the more for his punishment, dwelling on the infamy of endeavouring to pluck such a great and popular individual, who had done honour to the manor by condescending

to visit it at all, and thanking God that the fellow was a vassal belonging to another manor. He was got thus far, when a waiter gave a letter to Scarmouth which had been put into his hands by a gentleman who had just left the room. Scarmouth opened the note with some agitation of manner, which was not lessened when he read the following communication :

“ Has your honour got no eyes, d—n me? Why the pretended stranger is our old chum, Dick Dashall, in disguise. So look to yourself, your honour, for d—n my peepers, but if you go too far about nailing his ears to the wainscot, but he shall blow you about the affair with ———, and see what sort of a figure you will cut then : and I’ll come in and charge you with having been his crony, and so perchance, if Dick gets

his ears fastened to the wainscot, your honour's ears may likewise be in danger. So look to yourself, your honour, and be assured it is true; from your friend,

“TIM TRICK.”

Scarmouth could scarcely breathe after reading this letter. He knew that, connected as he was with Tim and Dick, and a number of other *Tims* and *Dicks*, equally *honourable men*, he must be very cautious how he ventured to rouse their anger against him. It would not do, however, to abate his tone in a moment, lest the suspicions of the by-standers should thus be turned upon himself; he therefore continued still to cry out for punishment, but without any movement to carry his measures into execution; and, as no other person seemed inclined to go beyond a little free flourish of language, Scarmouth, on seeing his

friend Tim make his re-appearance in the room, thought it prudent to modify his threats, and to content himself with moving, that, after returning the money, the sharper should only be kicked out of the room, as a salutary example to all other scoundrels who sought to play upon the ignorance or inexperience of individuals."

Bull-dog, who, till this moment, had been a silent spectator and listener, now thought it time to interfere. "Kick him out! No, d—n him, as he is not a vassal of this manor, I'll not put up with such a mild punishment. If no one else will pin him to the wainscot, why I'll e'en take the office of executioner upon myself."

Saying this, Bull-dog instantly drew his sword, and, assuming a most fierce air, was stepping up to Dick to carry his

threat into effect, when Scarmouth, stepping between, begged Bull-dog to leave the rascal to meet a punishment more equal to his deserts. "Let us lock him up," he continued, "and consult Narcissus on the mode and measure of retribution which it may be best to bestow on him. By this means, we shall make his degradation more public, as well as his punishment more severe."

The veteran might have attended to this advice, but for some strange sentiments which possessed his mind respecting Scarmouth himself, whom he could not avoid suspecting of collusion with the sharper. He had watched his motion while reading the note from Tim Trick, and he had correctly judged that the agitation he then witnessed could only have proceeded from fear or guilt. His sudden alteration of tone, and the

abatement of his apparent violence, had all tended to corroborate these opinions and, in consequence of the strong impression which now rested on his mind, he determined not to pay any attention to Scarmouth's proposal, which he considered as merely intended to gain time, but to take redress into his own hands, and inflict chastisement on the offender upon the spot.

“Stand clear, my good friend,” returned Bull-dog: “I’ll give the scoundrel no chance of escaping my vengeance.” Thus speaking, he pushed aside Scarmouth, while the shivering sharper, turning round, made a spring across the room, and being seconded by Tim, who was standing near the door, and who, through apparent thoughtlessness, had half opened it to take his own departure, rushed headlong out of the room at a

single leap, cleared the whole flight of stairs, and, in a moment, was completely out of the reach of Bull-dog's vengeance ; while Scarmouth, freed from the tremendous apprehensions which had assailed him with such uncommon violence, once again began to feel courage reviving in his almost paralyzed bosom.

CHAPTER XII.

Unpleasant Meeting—Retort upon Retort—Scarmouth in a Quandary—Inference of Narcissus—Forbearance of Bull-Dog—Restoration of Scarmouth.

SCARMOUTH was invited to meet Bull-dog at the table of Narcissus on the following day, and he felt that such a rencontre, so soon after the awkward occurrence at the gaming-house, was by no means pleasant to his feelings. He had seen that Bull-dog had marked him with no common curiosity during the scene of bustle which had succeeded the detection of the sharper, and, being

left to draw his own inferences from his observation, he saw himself in imagination identified with the cheat, whose awkward management had exposed himself to the indignation of the company. He was aware that Narcissus would suspect him of having hatched the plot for the purpose of cheating Bull-dog, and although, under any other circumstances, he would have made no objection to the revealing of all his tricks to his patron, who, by the way, had often himself participated, he could not sit easy under the imputations which might be fastened upon him, of selecting for his victim a man who had done so much service to the world, and who was followed and adored by all the other vassals. He justly argued that such an insinuation as this, levelled at his character, bad as it was, would have the undoubted effect of making it appear still blacker to all the world than it ever yet

had appeared, since he should forthwith be represented as a man without honour, without gratitude, without any association with those feelings which exalt human nature. He determined, however, after some deliberation and much discussion with the rest of the fraternity to laugh it off as a mere *bagatelle*, a circumstance of every day's occurrence, and as a thing in no way to be considered as criminal, but what could be perfectly justified by the maxim of *catch who catch can*! He hoped, by giving this turn of levity to the thing itself, to induce Narcissus to second his exertions, and to turn the whole into a subject fitter for mirth and merriment than for any serious consideration : and by this means, he trusted he should escape without sustaining any great injury.

In the mean time, Bull-dog also was

busily engaged in revolving in his mind the circumstances of the attempted fraud, and, greatly as he felt desirous, for the sake of Narcissus, to acquit Scarmouth of any collusion or participation in the transaction, he could not dismiss from his mind the suspicions which arose there against this great vassal. He swore most vehemently that he would never sit down to table again with Scarmouth; but scarcely were the words passed his lips, scarcely was the oath dry which had escaped from his tongue, before he recollected the commands he had received to dine with Narcissus, and there he was sure to meet the hateful object of his mistrust. In the first paroxysm of rage and indignation, the old veteran resolved to proceed immediately to Narcissus, and to lay all the narrative of the occurrences before him, and thus to insure his interference and his assist-

ance to discover whether or not Scarmouth was indeed implicated in the villainous transaction; and, if he were, to procure his exposure and punishment.—Cooler reflection pointed out the intimacy which prevailed between Narcissus and Scarmouth, and coupling this circumstance with a number of reports which had gone abroad tending even to impeach the honourable conduct of Narcissus himself on occasions of this sort: in particular, Bull-dog recalled to mind what he had heard respecting some horse-races which were established in the manor, and in the sports of which Narcissus was deeply engaged; but, owing to some singular discovery respecting his conduct, the vassals, with whom he had associated himself on this occasion, marked the indignation they felt against him, by turning him out of their society. When Bull-dog began seriously to weigh

all these circumstances, his first resolution rapidly gave way, and he suspected it possible that the origin of the cheat which had been played off upon him might be traced back further than Scarmouth. At all events it was palpably evident that it would not be politic to carry his complaints to Narcissus; although respect for his character and gratitude for his services might induce the deputy-lord to pretend to make a great fuss and bustle about it, it was not much to be expected that he would do any thing beyond this, nor punish his favourite companions merely for the sake of gratifying a stranger. Bull-dog determined, therefore, to say nothing, but, as he had recovered the amount of his losses from the sharper, to account himself so far a fortunate fellow, and to pocket the insult, which had made his loss the more heavy, as well as he could.

Thus were the two-heroes disposed when they met each other at the table of Narcissus; so that it may be said, thus far the hero of the gaming-table prevailed over the hero of the field. Cautious, however, as Scarmouth had been not to give Narcissus a hint of what had passed, a more busy tell-tale had whispered the whole transaction into his ear. The deputy-lord was tickled exceedingly with the idea of Scarmouth's danger; but as Tim and Dick were old cronies of his, as well as Scarmouth's, he rejoiced that things had not gone farther, but that the dexterity of his brethren had enabled the sharper to make his escape. There may be some foolishly conscientious lords who would have been shocked at the idea of having a stranger, who had come to do honor to their castles, fleeced and insulted in this kind of way, and who, instead of conniving at the transaction,

would have exposed it, and pursued with the severity of punishment those with whom the infamous proceeding originated. But such a lord was not Narcissus. He had been too far involved in that sort of trickery himself not to be aware that it was the result of an infirmity in human nature, rather than a vicious disposition ; and that, by reason of this infirmity, the incentives to cheating operated so very strongly, that it was impossible for the weakness of moral resolution to withstand them. Narcissus, therefore, was most mercifully disposed to overlook the whole transaction ; or, if in a moment of thoughtless merriment, he should perchance hit upon the subject, he resolved not to treat it as though he considered it entitled to any serious notice. Thus accurately did Narcissus and Scarmouth coincide in their opinions, which may, perhaps, lead the reader to suspect that

there might be some secret understanding between them in matters of this description ; of this, however, he is fully as well informed as ourselves, therefore we will not attempt to illustrate the idea any farther, seeing that we are bound by agreement not to write any thing against lords of manors and such like personages.

The event occurred as Narcissus anticipated. Each noble individual had swallowed, according to some accounts, his fifth, and, according to others, his sixth bottle, when Scarmouth, encouraged by a wink from the deputy-lord, began to quiz Bull-dog on his losses of the two preceding evenings. " It was pretty tightish work, my boy," he continued, " and you were d——d glad to pull up. Thank God, however, as you

said, my hearty captain, the fellow was none of our manor!"

"But some of your manor might have been at the bottom of the fraud!" returned Bull-dog, looking rather mistrustfully at Scarmouth.

"Do you think so?" asked Scarmouth, with an air of apparent indignation at the idea; which might have puzzled a better physiognomist than Bull-dog; "Do you think so? By the lord, but I would give my very best pair of whiskers to discover it! Nothing should save him from the fury of my arm. It was an infamous trick."

Bull-dog began to waver in his suspicions. He knew that whiskers were held to be very sacred things at the castle of Narcissus, and he could not con-

ceive it possible that Scarmouth would sport with such an oath. He was aware that Narcissus valued his whiskers at the price of more than half his manor; that they were, in fact, one of the principal gods he worshipped; and that an insult offered to them was of more consequence than an injury done to their wearer.—Bull-dog also valued his own whiskers not a little; and therefore he considered very naturally that Scarmouth must set a high estimation upon his, and would not, by any means, offer to swear upon them to the truth of any thing which was not true. The old veteran, notwithstanding all his mighty exploits in battle, notwithstanding the great sagacity, skill, and prudence, he had displayed whenever he was called upon to practise as a *wholesale phlebotomist*, thus proved himself a very novice in the manners and customs of some of the most exalted vas-

sals in Fever-isle, who cared as little about preserving an oath as they did about any other moral duty, having expunged from their mind every thing which tended to restrict their inclinations, or to impose upon them any obligation whatever, except that of their own will and pleasure.

“It was an infamous trick,” replied Bull-dog, “and d—n me if there must not have been some other person engaged in it! I wish to God I could get some corroboration of the suspicions which have taken possession of my mind. I would not then return home without revenging myself, although I have been once disappointed.”

“Suspicions!” echoed Scarmouth, colouring deeply, and betraying a degree of agitation which could not escape

the prying eye of Bull-dog—"Whom do you suspect?"

"Whom do I suspect?" returned Bull-dog, looking shrewdly at Scarmouth. "Do you suspect no person? Did you see no person dreadfully agitated while I was threatening to pin the poor devil's ears to the wainscot? Did you see none endeavouring to throw facilities in the way of the scoundrel's escape?"

Scarmouth's emotion increased prodigiously at each interrogatory. He stammered, and vainly endeavoured to connect his words for a reply, when Narcissus, seeing the confusion of his favourite, suddenly called off the attention of Bull-dog, by taking up the subject himself—"So, my dear friend," said he—"Scarmouth tells me you were not

in luck last night. Ecod I think you were lucky to come off so well out of the hands of these d—d sharpers.— No doubt there are more than one!”

“ I have not a doubt there were,” replied Bull-dog :—“ Nay, I am sure *now* that there are more than *two* concerned in the rascally transaction. But, however, I am determined to say or to think no more about it. I am willing entirely to banish the circumstance from my memory, with the hope that it will produce the good effect of lessening my rage for play, in some measure ; and of making me more cautious, when I do play, not to trust myself to a stranger.”

“ But if you know there were several concerned,” returned Narcisus—“ why do you pause short of their exposure and punishment? You shall have all my

assistance and influence, depend upon it; for an insult offered to you, while honouring me with a visit, is a violent outrage offered to me."

Bull-dog was staggered again by this show of dignified protection. "Surely," said he, internally,—“it is not possible that this deputy-lord should be so much the disciple of duplicity, as to speak thus fairly to me, while his breast is full of evil meditations towards me. It must be Scarmouth alone who is implicated in the disgraceful trick, and Narcissus has not disgraced himself by a collusion with such a miscreant.” Thus reasoned Bull-dog within himself, and immediately replied, in a softened tone—“I might be mistaken, my lord, as to the authors and participators in the scheme, and therefore, I will not venture to implicate any one on the slight evidence of my own suspicions only.”

Scarmouth was relieved from an overwhelming load of perplexity and fear by this decision of Bull-dog, and having pretty well re-composed himself, during the colloquy between Narcissus and the veteran, he ventured again to join in commendation of the resolution of his rude opponent, and, as he received no new retort, the evening passed away pretty pleasantly. Wine banished suspicion from the one, and apprehension from the other of the parties, and every spark of combustion which dwelt in their bosoms was quickly extinguished beneath multiplied bumpers.

CHAPTER XIII.

A Ride through the Park—Taciturnity—Unwelcome Guest—The Author sheweth the Reader how Ladies of Rank sometimes quarrel—and giveth a practical Essay on Letter-writing.

AND now, most gentle reader, with thy leave, we will pay a visit to another quarter. After the dismissal of poor crest-fallen Orangegrass, we left the Lady Charlotte stepping into her landau, with a view to re-invigorate her spirits by a ride round the parks. For about three quarters of an hour, she continued thus *tête-à-tête* with her governess, without once opening her mouth, except to

answer the questions which way her ladyship would choose to ride. Her thoughts were fully occupied with the ill-temper of her father, the persecutions of her mother, and the incivility and assurance of Orangegrass. "Have I acted ill towards my father?" she asked. Her reason answered in the negative. She had but alluded to the sufferings of her mother, and if her father took offence at this subject, (certainly not an unnatural one for an affectionate daughter to introduce,) she could see no cause to condemn herself for having given the occasion for his anger. Had she fulfilled her duty to her mother? Her heart replied in the affirmative. She had endeavoured to move her father's feelings in her behalf, and that she had done so in vain, was not to be attributed to her as a fault. She was determined herself always to fulfil the dictates of

her own duty and affection, to ward off from her mother all the evils which it might be in her power to avert, and to endeavour, by acts of continual attention and kindness, to diminish the measure of sorrow which fate appeared to have filled out for her. Had she injured her own feelings by the dismissal of Orangegraft? No; she felt assured that the content of mind and self-satisfaction she experienced since she had carried this measure into effect, and discharged her lover, was far beyond any happiness she enjoyed in his company; and after his unprecedented rudeness towards her, and the palpable duplicity of conduct which he had displayed in his behaviour, she must have had a much more limited portion of spirit than commonly falls to the share of human beings, if she could have felt pleasure in or even tolerated his company any longer. Thus

Lady Charlotte amused herself, during her ride, with this internal conversation, and, as the result of it was highly satisfactory to her mind, she felt herself astonishingly composed and elevated by the retrospect of her own decisive conduct. It was true she was not yet free from apprehensions with regard to the future; she knew her father's obstinacy, as well as his violence of temper; she was aware that when he had any favourite design in view, he would never allow himself, by any obstacles, which it was in the reach of possibility to subdue, to be diverted from the pursuit of his object, and she was not without serious fears that this marriage between herself and Orangegrass might be one of these desirable measures, in his opinion, which he would not easily be induced to abandon. Not that this consideration produced the least effect upon

her resolution ; she was determined that in all matters which concerned her mother's happiness or her own, she would shew herself equally inflexible to him. She had just come to this conclusion, when the thread of her reflections was suddenly snapped asunder by the voice of her governess, who, with a hesitating and respectful tone of voice, enquired—"Where will your ladyship be driven to next?"

"Home again !" returned Lady Charlotte, after a short pause, in which she recalled to mind the letters she had commenced, and which she now determined to finish and dispatch without delay. The landau was instantly turned about, and Lady Charlotte was deeply involved in discussion of the subjects of her proposed correspondence, when she reached her own door ; and received in-

formation that her grandmother Puggilla, the mother of Narcissus, was waiting her return, and was at that moment taking some refreshment in Lady Charlotte's room.

This unexpected visitor was, by no means an agreeable guest to Lady Charlotte, who disliked her grandmother for divers reasons, the most prominent of which was the active part which the latter had uniformly taken in all the schemes which were intended and aimed to degrade her mother. Independent of this disgusting trait in her character, at least it so appeared to the Lady Charlotte, the Lady Puggilla was not sufficiently benevolent in her sentiments nor practice: she seemed to have none of those principles and feelings which usually belong to persons of very high consideration and property; but was very

much in the habit of going round the kitchens of the castles, and examining all the scrapings, to pick up the cheese-parings and the candle-ends which might be in danger of being thrown away, and these, and all other scraps of every description she hoarded up, and when they amounted to any thing of consequence, she would send one of her maids, (for she could trust a maid rather than a footman,) to dispose of the ore at some chandler's shop in the neighbourhood, and when, by these means, she had collected sufficient money, she usually laid it out in gewgaws to ornament her dress for public occasions. Once some arch rogue or other, seeing her strong predilection for finery, and being aware that she had a prodigious quantity of gowns, &c. laid by, although at the same time, she declared she had not one to her back, broke open a cof-

fer or two in which her ladyship deposited her valuables, and stole therefrom a countless number of dresses, which almost broke the poor old lady's heart, as, independent of the loss itself, she was compelled to make known the quantity of articles stolen, thus exposing to all the manor the falsehoods she had been palming upon the vassals. At another time, and that more recently, some wags had written a letter to the directors of a charitable institution of the manor in the name of Puggilla, desiring to subscribe for a large sum of money, and directing them to apply to a banker's for the amount. On application, however, it all turned out to be a mere *hoax*, though unlike the generality of *hoaxes*, it turned out to good advantage, since it induced Puggilla, in order to save her own credit, in some degree, to do something benevolent for the chari-

ty, which was a thing so entirely new in the chronicle of her actions, that it put the whole of the manor in a stew of astonishment, such as it had seldom experienced before. But Puggilla had rendered herself still more obnoxious to Lady Charlotte, by going secretly to her desk, and ransacking all her papers and letters to find out all she could respecting her private concerns ; especially, on one occasion, she had laid hold of a letter or two of Germania's, and was busily employed in conning them over, when Lady Charlotte chanced to come into the apartment, and to detect the old lady in the very act of worming out her secrets. The consequence was a dreadful falling out between them, in which Puggilla asserted, that, as her grandmother, she had a right to see her letters, and that see them she would, she was determined. To which Lady Charlotte made answer, that she was welcome to read all her let-

ters, except those from her mother, and that these should not be read by her, nor by any other person. High words ensued, and, Puggilla still taking up another letter, Lady Charlotte, with a becoming spirit, snatched it out of her hand, and put the whole away out of her reach. In consequence of this conduct, Lady Charlotte and Puggilla had never since been upon neighbourly nor friendly terms, and Lady Charlotte, therefore, as soon as she heard who was her visitor now, felt very well assured that she came on some very particular and unpleasant errand. She would therefore gladly have declined the interview altogether, had she been so situated as to have been able to act entirely upon the suggestions of her own inclination. But this she was not free to do, and therefore was fain to submit.

After adjusting her dress a little,

Lady Charlotte entered the room where Puggilla was employed, not in eating and drinking, but with spectacles on nose, and face thrust close down upon the writing-stand, perusing the letter which Lady Charlotte had commenced to her father, &c. Lady Charlotte started back on perceiving how her grandmother was employed, and would willingly have left the room, and returned no more, but the noise she made in opening the door had disturbed the old lady, who showed some symptoms of discomposure and perturbation, which were not diminished by the greeting of Lady Charlotte, who satirically exclaimed—"Your pardon, madam, I have entered at an inconvenient moment. I ought to have been more cautious at my entrance, especially as this is not the first time I have been the cause of confusion to your ladyship."

All this time Puggilla had been endeavouring to recover herself, but without effect. Lady Charlotte had concluded for some minutes, and still all was silent. The old lady appeared so totally abashed, that Lady Charlotte herself could not avoid feeling something like pity for her situation, and therefore, without doing any thing which could possibly add to her ladyship's confusion, she intreated her grandmother to be seated, and very respectfully asked to what she must consider herself indebted for this visit?

It is the disposition of some persons to tremble and shrink within themselves at the sound of a rebuff, and these very individuals are usually the most haughty when they are accosted and treated with moderation and temper. Such was the character of Puggilla, who confounded as she was by the satirical manner in

which Lady Charlotte had at first accosted her, no sooner perceived the latter relax, than her own haughtiness rose in the same ratio.

“Grand-daughter!” said she, suddenly assuming a strange peremptoriness of manner and tone—“you are as flip-pant as ever, and permit me to tell you, that sauciness very ill becomes you, especially to me, to whom you owe every reverence and respect. I am come, Miss, to learn what it is you have taken into your head about poor Orangeraft, that, after giving him so much encouragement, and raising his hopes, you have discharged him at a moment’s notice, and driven him almost broken-hearted out of the house. I don’t approve of those fancies in young giddy girls, not I, and I have desired your father to let me interfere, for, in my opinion, the

sooner you are sent out of this country, and away from those that bias and corrupt your principles, the better. So now, Miss, be candid and respectful to your grandmother."

Lady Charlotte's respect was all overturned in a moment by this arrogant address. All her fiery feelings were kindled, and it was not for two or three minutes that she would venture to reply at all. When she had sufficiently digested her answer, however, she returned—"Madam, your ladyship does wrong to *demand* what I could never consent to grant to other than a *request*. But, madam, since you have desired me to be candid, candid I will be. I have explained myself to Orangegrass, and I am about to address a letter to my father on the subject, as your ladyship has seen; and to my mother, madam, I long since

confided my intentions ; and none else do I consider as having a right to question me concerning the matter, and to none other will I return any satisfactory answer."

"What!" cried Puggilla, "refuse to satisfy me? Know, pert Miss, that I am come from your father, and that, if you don't alter your manners and your sentiments too, I have advised him to measures which he has promised to adopt as soon as his visitors shall have left him; and then, Miss, I'll warrant you, that your high spirit will be fetched down a little. I don't know what you expect to come to, not I. Here, I understand, every day you are squandering away your money in useless extravagance, and that not a beggar comes to your door, but you must give him money, forsooth! Not a tradesman tells

you a tale of distress, but you must out with your handkerchief and empty your purse in a moment ! Did you ever hear of my doing such ridiculous things, Miss ? Did you ever hear of my launching out into such prodigality ? No, I believe not, indeed ; if I had been guilty of such tricks, let me tell you, I should never have been thought of as I am now, girl. Are there not parish-houses and workhouses for poor wretches ? If you have any guineas to spare it would better become you to give them to me, to assist me in getting through the enormous expences I have got to meet in consequence of the long illness of your grandfather. I cannot, for my life, imagine how I have managed to get through as far as I have, and with so many expensive children as I have to bring up, and manage too ! Aye, aye, girl ; I'll have you locked up, you may depend upon it."

"Locked up, madam ! Locked up ! Locked up ! did you say, madam ?" reiterated the astonished and confused Lady Charlotte.

"Yes, Miss Chirrup ! Locked up," replied Puggilla : "your father has promised me, if you continue obdurate and undutiful, as soon as his visitors are gone, to shut up the house he has given you, to discharge all your servants, and to make you live under his eye, and to receive no visitors nor letters but what he approves ; and farther to let no persons be about you except such as are entirely devoted to his interests, which ought to be yours, miss. So let me recommend a very different mode of behaviour to you, by adopting which *voluntarily*, you will prevent us from the necessity of compelling you to act according to the principles of duty. Yes,

miss, you may stamp, and stare, and hector away ; but, after managing so many children of my own, I am not now going to be crossed and thwarted in my resolution to manage you. No, no ! if you were ten times more haughty than you are, I would soon fetch you down."

As she said this, Puggilla flounced out of the room in a strange state of agitation, leaving Lady Charlotte not a whit better ; but who finding all attempts to subdue the violence of her feelings absolutely useless, threw herself down upon the sofa, and wept bitterly for upwards of half an hour ; by which time the heat of her passion was pretty well quenched and cooled. " But I will write my letter to-day, in spite of that good-for-nothing, ugly old woman, that I will ! " cried Lady Charlotte, when she began to grow a little composed ; and, so say-

ing, she jumped off the sofa, and once more sat down to the writing-stand, where, after some time, she produced the following letters :

“ DEAR FATHER,

“ When Orangraft informed me, that in consequence of his long residence in this manor, he considered it more his own country than that of which his father is the lord, and therefore that he should prefer a residence here with me to a house on his own paternal estate, I did not expect any change of sentiment, and therefore I encouraged his addresses, because I did not consider any breach of the intercourse existing betwixt my mother and myself could be the necessary consequence of an union with him. But afterwards, when I repeated the questions, for the sake of obviating any possible misunderstanding, and received

only equivocal replies,—when I was refused a promise of residence here in writing, and otherwise secured ;—and when, to crown all, I was told by Orangegrass that I might sometimes (that is, when he felt disposed) see my mother, but that my mother should, on no account, visit at my house, I cannot but think some wish of your's has influenced his determination. He cannot misunderstand my wishes, and if he considers them as *second* to the wishes of any other earthly being, I am resolved never to consent to any nearer connection with a man, whose affection towards me must either be very weak, or whose resolution and sentiments very wavering and undecided. To prove that my opinions are more firm, I beg of you to consider this determination, as only to be altered by the complete revocation of all the ex-

pressions and breaches of promise which caused it.

Your dutiful daughter,

“C.”

To Blenkinson she wrote precisely to the same effect; and to Orangecraft, after several attempts to please herself, she penned the following:

“SIR,

“If you had been true to your engagements and faithful to your promises, two qualifications which are inseparable from the character of a man of honour, you had spared me the pain of writing and yourself the mortification of receiving this inclosure. I think it due to you, as well as to myself, to commit to paper the real cause of the dispute which has closed our acquaintance for ever, that, if the world is to be troubled with a detail

of our actions, it may have before it the materials on which to form a correct judgment. You engaged to live in Fever-isle, which, you said, you preferred to your father's manor; and this you expressed, because you knew my aversion to quitting my native place, and the estate of my future inheritance. You knew my affection for my mother, and promised that it should never be violated. You have since departed from these promises: I ask not at whose instigation; my limited penetration is sufficiently extensive to enable me to form what I fear will prove too sure a decision. Suffice it for me to say, that my heart approves my judgment, when it pronounces against you a sentence of banishment from my presence. I wish you not to recant; you have opened my eyes to the imbecility of your character; and, with whatever frailties it may please

Heaven to endue my future husband, I pray that weakness of mind may not be amongst the number. Before I close, I shall merely add, that I had no other fault to find with you. If I saw nothing to admire, previous to the discovery of your duplicity, I saw nothing to despise; now I reverse my opinions altogether.— I see every thing to despise; and that you have rendered yourself disagreeable in my opinion is not my fault. The cause was in yourself, on yourself will be the consequences; for, be assured, I feel no regret at stating, that I never shall be your's.

“ C.”

Having satisfied herself with the contents of these letters, Lady Charlotte charged her steward with the delivery of them, and then felt her mind relieved of a burden which had for some days

oppressed it with a weight which she was unable to endure. She had now discharged the duties she owed to all parties, and felt herself composed beyond measure, and so light of heart, that not a single care seemed to have made her its habitation.

CHAPTER XIV.

Narcissus planneth a water excursion—The Author stayeth on shore to examine the opinions of the tenantry—Preparations for a Grand Festival—Public sentiment respecting the state of the manor and the usage of Germania.

FOR the amusement of his guests Narcissus had planned an excursion by water to a part of his manor where the art of building vessels was carried on to a great extent, and this he determined should be a procession of great splendour, both with a view to swell the enjoyment of the visitors themselves, and

to create a little wonder and curiosity among the vassals. For this purpose, he caused all the most beautiful of his vessels to be fitted up in a style of unequalled splendour, in order to convey the noble group down the river, which flowed near to his castle, in a manner suitable to his rank and dignity. But this excursion was also planned from another motive, and with another view, and these no other than to give the opportunity to Narcissus of forwarding his suite to Lady Longbonnet, by displaying some of his elegance before her. With regard to any particular feats of activity, his ability would not be able to second his inclination; since of late years, either from excessive eating, excessive drinking, or some other excessive indulgence, he had become so disgustingly fat that he was scarcely able to ascend or to descend from his carriage; consequently he was

very ill calculated to gambol before his *chere amie*, or to show any other kind of manual dexterity. It hath been repeatedly said, that he who is deprived of the exercise of any faculty, generally possesses the others in a more perfect degree than those who are blessed with the use of the common allotment of senses ; and perhaps the same argument may apply to other cases and to other matters ; for instance, as Narcissus could not occupy himself in very laborious feats, and was excluded by his size from the opportunity of showing any elegance of exercise, he had had time to study the best mode of making a bow, in which he surpassed the best dancing-masters in his manor. He was also prettily gifted with language, and could turn a compliment most happily, as we have before stated ; and it is probable that he speculated upon turning these few advantages

which belonged to him to as good a purpose as possible. And to this kind of employment we will for the present leave Narcissus, endeavouring to carry into effect his mischievous schemes against the heart of his fair visitor, while we take a view of the opinions and behaviour of the tenants or vassals of the manor.

The coming of these noble visitors had created a great ferment amongst the Fever-islanders, who were perhaps a people as fond of novel and curious sights as any set of vassals you could find over the whole world; and a great number of them having frequently assembled to see the strangers, without success, out of mere spite and revenge for their disappointment, they indulged themselves in the most acrimonious remarks upon the lords themselves, as well

as upon their manner of conducting themselves. In the higher classes, amongst the principal tenants, there was scarcely ever more than a single opinion upon these subjects, but it was in the houses of refreshment, where the lower order of the tenantry met together daily after business was ended, to discuss the merits of tobacco and porter, that frequently they entered upon topics of a political tendency, which they sometimes handled with a great deal of ingenuity and argument, insomuch that it has been remarked that there was more sound sense to be found amongst the tenants of the Fever-isle, than is generally even in the castles of all the lords of manors in the world, where it is natural to infer, that the great body of the intellect of the different manors is assembled together. These groupings of tenantry, too, were perhaps

the most independent men in existence, for, upon every question which concerned Narcissus, or his wife, or the interests of the manor separately, they made no kind of scruple of censuring as freely what they thought deserving of censure, as of praising whatever appeared to them worthy of that distinction. Now the vigilance of these vassals had been recently excited in a particular degree, by the great and superb additions which were making at a vast expense to the castle of Narcissus, as it was pretended, with a view to the better entertainment of the strange lords who were come to see the manor; although it was evident to all the tenantry, that works on such an extensive scale could not be completed during the period of the visitors' stay in the manor.

And first of all there was a most

splendid temple erected in the garden of the castle, whose height was enormous, and on the top of which was placed a superb dome, but what the purpose of this lofty building was it was impossible for any but the deputy lord and a few of the principal vassals to discover ; although some have asserted that it was the intention of Narcissus to fix a round-about on the top of the dome, in which such of the tenants who chose to squander their money, and endanger their necks, were to be allowed the amusement of being whirled for a quarter of an hour round an elevated apex, until they became too giddy to sit any longer.

In the parks, ground was marked out for another round-about upon a safer scale, being only to be elevated about six feet from the ground, and which was

to carry only the higher order of the tenantry, because their lives and bones were considered of more value than those of the commonalty, and this machine, it was calculated, would accommodate about four hundred individuals; it was only intended to be set in motion once, as soon as filled, and to continue for about an hour, until all the tenantry should have been allowed time to survey the countenances of their betters. This machine was to be set in motion by a steam-engine worked for the sole purpose.

There was also a place for another more extensive one for the lower classes, capable of containing ten thousand persons, which was to be set in motion as often as it was filled, and to go round for the space of five minutes, as nobody would have any desire to look at them,

and it being merely intended to draw the crowd from the others.

Ground was allotted for an immense humming-top, the crest of which was to rise to a level with the dome of the temple, in order that the tenants who were by virtue of their liberal payments to fill the lofty round-about, and the noble spectators who were expected to occupy the higher stories of the temple, might have a good opportunity of surveying the summit, on which was to be painted a very curious device, signifying that the humming-top was merely a type to shew how the Fever-islanders consented to be hummed, whenever the rich and more powerful portion of the tenants chose to enter into a conspiracy against their common sense and penetration. And this device, it was believed, it would have been dangerous to paint

on the lower part of the top, lest the vassals below should take offence at it.

In a large bason of water which occupied the centre of the park were to be placed a number of ships which were to practise a mock sea-fight, for the amusement of the vassals, and this mock fight was called *Naumachia*, from the Latin ; and as this sort of fights was in vogue with the Romans, we subjoin a sketch of them from Dr. Smollett's Travels, which may serve to instruct the reader as to their nature and origin :—" The Roman Emperors seemed more disposed to elevate and surprise, than to conduct their public diversions according to the rules of reason and propriety. One would imagine that it was with this view they instituted the *Naumachia*, or naval engagements, performed by half-a-dozen small galleys of a side, in an artificial

bason of fresh water. These gallies, I suppose, were not so large as common fishing smacks, for they were moved by two, three, or four oars of a side, according to their different rates."***** Afterwards, in speaking of the Naumachia of the Emperor Domitian, described by Suetonius, as being performed in a lake made for the purpose near the Tiber, Dr. Smollett adds—"This artificial lake was no longer than the piece of water in Hyde Park, and yet the historian says, it was about large enough for real and entire fleets. How would it sound in the ears of a British sailor, an advertisement, that a mock engagement between two squadrons of men of war would be exhibited, on such a day, in the Serpentine river? or that the ships of the line taken from the enemy would be carried in procession from Hyde Park corner to Tower wharf? Certain it is,

that Lucullus, in one of his triumphs, had a hundred and ten ships of war (*navas longas*) carried through the streets of Róme. Nothing can give a more contemptible idea of their naval power than this testimony of their historians, who declare that their seamen or mariners were formed by exercising small row-boats in an inclosed pool of fresh water. Had they not the sea within a few miles of them ; and the river Tiber running through their capital ! Even this would have been much more proper for exercising their watermen, than a pond of still water, not much larger than a cold bath."

If the reader can find out any analogy between this description and the sea-fights of Fever-island, he is welcome to all the credit he will acquire for his penetration ; and we will leave him to

the quiet enjoyment of his reward, while we proceed with our description. The vessels in the bason of Narcissus's park were to be larger than row-boats, and built on the exact model of men-of-war, such as those which the Fever-islanders had built for the protection of their own manor, and the annoyance of the manors of other lords. And as there would be a great want of wind and water to give a good effect to the scene, and to give scope for the exercise of the mariners' talents, the defect was to be supplied by a most ingenious contrivance, neither more nor less than an immense pair of forge bellows, which was to be brought to bear under the surface of the water, and by the constant working of which, there would be raised a plentiful supply of waves, of such sorts and sizes, as would best suit the manœuvrings of the ships. And this was a most novel idea, because

as, in a general way, the seamen are compelled to suit their tactics to the winds, and, consequently, may sometimes appear very awkward in managing their vessels; in this case, the wind being made entirely subservient to the tactics, the mariners would have the privilege of calling for high or low—north, south, east, or west winds, which ever should best suit their convenience, as it was intended to have the bason entirely circled with large bellows, placed judiciously on the tops of the trees, and which would pour down tempests or breathe zephyrs according to the wish and command of the commodore of the squadrons for whose use they were to be appointed.

Now, although it was purely and kindly out of consideration to the enjoyment of the tenantry that Narcissus had

planned and prepared all these magnificent doings, yet there was a great deal of ingratitude discovered amongst the vassals, inasmuch as they began to complain of the folly of their deputy-lord, in thus foolishly squandering away that money which ought to have been appropriated to the improvement of the manor. This tenant called it prodigality of behaviour which deserved to be reprehended in the most severe terms, and to be checked before it extended to a still more alarming extent. The expense was beyond all calculation; indeed, so enormous was it expected to be, that when the council of Narcissus themselves called upon him for an estimate of the amount, he equivocated for a long time, and then handed to them a gross sum for labour, deducting all the cost of the materials, which must at least, have amounted to four times the amount of

the work of which he had composed his estimate. Another tenant would remark that, supposing the preparations and entertainments had cost nothing at all, it was not a dignified manner of gratifying the vassals of the manor; but that it would have been much more elevated and lord-like if he had opened all the prison doors, and set free a great number of unfortunate tenants who, perhaps, had been immured for years in unwholesome dungeons, and thus have given happiness to thousands of wretched families, and probably have reformed thousands of vassals from vicious pursuits and practices.

Some tenants confined their censures to only a portion of the amusements and erections, and thought the temple a piece of absurdity, but a splendid bridge which had been thrown over the Canal, a desirable and useful as well as elegant

acquisition ; while those who condemned in the gross, contended, that, as there was scarcely a foot of land through the whole manor which was able to bear a full crop for want of manure, it was very improvident, to speak in the most gentle terms, for the deputy-lord of the manor to throw away the money into the air, which, spent upon the soil, would have returned itself with interest. There was also a party of still more reflecting men, whom the friends of Narcissus had called seditious and croakers, for no other earthly reason than that they dwelt upon the poverty to which the estate had fallen since it came into the hands of the present family, asserting, that, when they took possession of it, the drains were all in excellent order, the ponds were all clear and pure, the stock wholesome and flourishing, the trees in the most excellent order,

and all the tenantry, to a single individual, as happy and contented as the tenants of any man in the universe. But how was the picture changed ! The drains were all stopped up, and were disabled from carrying away the filth and corruption which had been engendered in the pond ; for want of a little timely care and foresight, the stock was thinned and wasted away with the rot, and the few which were left upon the manor looked so sickly and wretched as to disgust the eye which had been accustomed to see them in better times ; the trees were all devoured by insects, which weighed down every branch and perforated every leaf, so that they would bear no fruit ; and as for the tenants, complaints were heard in every corner of the estate, and numbers had actually gone away, and taken their families to till and to cultivate in a more

promising' and profitable manor. Nothing but ruin, and wretchedness, they contended, could possibly result from the system of extravagance and dissipation which was now so universally acted upon, and they called loudly and earnestly upon the tenants, before it was too late, before the devastations and dilapidations upon the manor became too notorious and too extensive to admit of a remedy, to meet together, consider of some mode of remonstrance, at once respectful and determined, and to go in a body to Narcissus and his advisers, and lay it before them.

'Such was the division of sentiment which prevailed at this moment amongst Fever-islanders, who certainly were not at any time endued with an uncommon share of patience; but being particularly fond of money, verifying the

old maxim of the misers, "those who have the getting of money, know best how to lay it out to advantage," they could not silently see their hoards daily exhausted through the extravagance or mismanagement of Narcissus. It was customary with them to say, if challenged with these absurd discontents, that, as they had given their cash freely, they had at least the right to grumble for their money. Things, however, did not seem to hold out much promise of amendment; for all the bosom friends of Narcissus, those whose councils he most listened to, were all very profligate in their expenditure of the wealth of the tenantry, insomuch that the latter had more than once applied to the deputy-lord for their dismissal, and they would ultimately have been turned out, could he have obtained any other servants who would have suited his taste. But the te-

nants to whom he applied demanded a compliance with certain conditions, to which Narcissus did not choose to accede, and the consequence was, that the negotiation was broken off, and the old party received notice to stay again. Ever since that moment they had not grown much in popularity until the settling of the disputes with the neighbouring manor created a great change in the opinion of the vassals, who now gave to Narcissus and his advisers a credit for which they had no more right than they had for the fame of economy. The presence of the lordly visitors also was a sort of check upon those expressions of public disapprobation, which previously had often occurred, and which probably would now have been carried to a much higher pitch, had not the vassals been restrained by respect for those who had come amongst them.

One circumstance which, doubtless, would have created an alarming ferment through the manor at any other time was the following. Puggilla, the mother of Narcissus, had given out her intention to display all her splendor on two particular days, when she meant to have grand routs for the reception of the visitors to Fever-isle, and of the most wealthy and best beloved of the tenantry. It was always a custom for Narcissus to be one of the party, and if the heir had a wife, it had been the practice or *etiquette* of the castle that she also should attend.— On this occasion, however, Narcissus having declared, that never in public or private life would he ever meet Germania, his wife, he thought it right to make Puggilla acquainted with this *courageous* and *manly* resolution, in order that she might take her measures accordingly.— Puggilla, who mortally hated Germa-

nia, was rejoiced at every opportunity which was allowed her of mortifying and persecuting her unfortunate daughter-in-law ; she therefore sat down, and penned a letter to Germania, acquainting her with her husband's declaration and determination, and requesting therefore that she would be pleased not to come and shew her face at her routs, as it would not be decent nor becoming to make out the deputy-lord a *liar*.—The unhappy Germania wrote again in answer to Puggilla, and received another reply, tantamount to the same as the first ; and as soon as the wife of Narcissus had received the letters, she appealed to the only tribunal which was at all inclined to sympathise with her, and laid all the letters before the tenantry.—This measure was a home stroke at the fame of Narcissus ; for, strongly as the tenants before this were inclined to take

part with the unfortunate Germania, this appeal greatly increased their ardour in her cause, and, consequently, in an equal degree diminished their esteem for her husband, who afterwards could not venture to shew himself abroad, without being hissed and hooted, and treated with the most unequivocal symptoms of public disgust and abhorrence.

It was at this unpropitious moment that Narcissus chose to carry on his suit against Germania, in order to pave the way to the possession of Lady Longbonnet ; and, as some hints respecting his intention had gone abroad amongst the tenants, they amused themselves with cracking their jokes at their lord's expence. His habitual indulgence in every excess, to the debility of his frame and the destruction of his constitution, gave a fine scope to the *croakers* to exercise

their risible faculties at his cost ; they had never liked him, and they spared no pains to ridicule him in every creek and corner of the estate. Caricatures were published, and lampoons issued from the press, describing him as pursuing pleasure which he had no ability to enjoy ; and accusing him of having, by his debaucheries, brought on impotency and all its attendant train of evils. Some recommended it to Lady Longbonnet to wed herself to a log, which would give her just as much enjoyment, and much less trouble and torment. Others, who were better versed in political knowledge, and who could see that more than one object must have attracted Lady Longbonnet to sacrifice herself, urged the superior policy of uniting herself with some man of energy as well as power, such as the Lord of Brushall, whose wife had died some few years be-

fore this time, and who still wandered about a lorn and solitary being. There would have been some compassionate feeling mingled with her self-interestedness had she directed her views to that quarter, but from the sphere to which she had been induced to look, she could hope for nothing in the world, except a bauble or two to decorate her head with, and a high-sounding but empty name.

The more reflecting portion of the tenantry, however, looked at the intention of Narcissus in a much more serious point of view, in its effect upon the persecuted Germania, whose character and comfort would thus be annihilated, merely to promote the ambitious views or political schemes of her husband. They reviewed all her conduct since she was brought over to Fever-isle, to be united

to the heir of the estate, and seeing nothing which could impeach her virtue, or justify the injurious treatment she had received, they vowed to stand up boldly in her cause, and to endeavour to impress upon the heart of Narcissus some feeling of contrition for the part he had hitherto acted, and a firm resolution to do justice where it was so loudly called for. Germania was a stranger ; she was a legacy left by her father to the protection of Fever-isle, and they swore that no farther insults should be allowed to assail her. They therefore desired her to make an appeal to the feelings of Narcissus, in the language adopted by Shakespeare, and put into the mouth of Catherine to the Eighth Henry :

Sir, I desire you do me right and justice,
And to bestow your pity on me ; for
I am a most poor woman, and a stranger,
Born out of your dominions ; having here

No judge indiff'rent, and no more assurance
Of equal friendship and proceeding. Alas ! Sir,
In what have I offended you ? What cause
Hath my behaviour giv'n to your displeasure,
That thus you should proceed to put me off,
And take your good grace from me ? Heaven witness
I've been to you a true and humble wife,
At all times to your will conformable :
Ever in fear to kindle your dislike ;
Yea, subject to your countenance, glad or sorry,
As I saw it inclin'd. When was the hour
I ever contradicted your desire,
Or made it not mine too ? Which of your friends
Have I not strove to love, although I knew
He was mine enemy ? What friend of mine,
That had to him deriv'd your anger, did I
Continue in my liking ? Nay, gave not notice
He was from thence discharg'd ? Sir, call to mind
That I have been your wife in that obedience
Scarce less than twenty years, and have been bless'd
With a fair daughter by you. If in the course
And process of this time you can report,
And prove it too, against mine honour aught,
My bond of wedlock, or my love and duty,
Against your sacred person ; in God's name
Turn me away, and let the foul'st contempt
Shut door upon me, and so give me up
To th' sharpest kind of justice.

The play from which this passage is selected was given out to be performed to promote the cause of Germania, but Narcissus interfered, and, fearful of the effect it might produce upon the minds of the tenantry, ordered it to be countermanded.

CHAPTER XV.

Orangegraft and Narcissus plot against Lady Charlotte—Stupidity of the former—Argument of Narcissus—Orangegraft consenteth to his own happiness—Result of conversation.

ORANGEGRAFT, who was of the water party with Narcissus, resolved to find some opportunity to converse with the deputy-lord on the subject of his daughter. He had every reason to believe that her father's whole soul was wrapped up in the projected union of their two houses, and he was anxious to discover to what lengths his inclination would

carry him in his endeavours to bring it into effect. He himself was partial in the extreme to Lady Charlotte, and would fain have sacrificed every thing to her wishes ; but he was too irresolute in his disposition and sentiments to enable him to resist the commands of Narcissus. When the latter proposed the union, the ardent lover, anxious to facilitate an event so dear to his heart, spontaneously promised to take up his residence with her in her native manor, as it was to be expected that this would be more agreeable to her than to become an exile from the estate to the possession of which she would one day be called. But this offer did not at all square with the views of Narcissus. "No," said he, hastily ; "I want her not here. I wish for her to find new friends and to form new connections ; at least, I wish to break asunder old ones. You know from whom I

would desire to separate her. I need not be more explicit. Take her abroad for a few years, and the result will be beneficial to us all. Do you not understand me?"

"Scarcely !" returned Orangegrass, who, as the reader, perchance, has ere this discovered, was not gifted with that admirable quickness of conception which is given to many men; in fact, so very deficient was he in the art of understanding half conceptions, that he was perfectly at a loss to comprehend the full drift of the speech of Narcissus. He understood, it is true, that he wished his daughter to be absent from the manor for a few years, but what design it was to answer he could not, for the soul of him, discover, nor what connections those were which he desired her to break asunder. It is true, he had not been

usually admitted to the political parties of Narcissus, by which we mean certain dinners which he gave to his particular friends amongst the tenantry, at which were discussed all matters relating to the manor, as well as those which interested his private views; and, therefore, it was unlikely that Orangeraft should have any very good information as to the views and motives of his intended father-in-law. He was withal a youth of very bounded qualifications; one who was not overburdened with intellect, whose mind was not very greatly expanded, but who had just wit enough to enable him to pass through the world without being set down for an absolute fool.—“Scarcely!” said he, with a look and a tone of voice which did not make a very favourable impression upon Narcissus, who was standing and gazing upon him with a look of eager curiosity.

“What! not understand me!” returned Narcissus, pettishly: “Why, zounds! boy, can I speak more intelligibly? I wish to separate the girl from her mother! Is that sufficiently plain? I would have her alienated from the interest she now feels for the Fever-islanders, who are not worth caring about; and if you do not promise me that you will take her abroad, and teach her to hate Germania, and to learn different ideas as to the rights and privileges of vassals, by the Lord, you shan’t have her!”

The menace was sufficient to shake a stronger resolution than Orangegrass possessed. He had acquiesced accordingly, and it was in the conversation which ensued afterwards with Lady Charlotte, that, in communicating this acquiescence, he received the rejection of his hand al-

together. He had now read the letter which Lady Charlotte had addressed to him, and determined either to induce Narcissus to aid him in the obtainment of her hand, by some more summary mode, or to take his departure instantly for his native manor, and no longer to remain in a state of uncertainty. His present situation was one of much pain and delicacy ; he knew not how to decide between the father and daughter ; from the latter he could derive no hope, unless he sacrificed the wishes and commands of her father ; and to obey the former was the *sine qua non* on which Narcissus had offered to give his consent, for it was evident that he sought rather to get rid of Lady Charlotte than to consult her happiness by a congenial union.

Thus determined, Orangegrass put his letter into the hands of Narcissus,

whose countenance, as he read it, plainly developed by its frequent changes the operation which the contents made upon his feelings. Ever and anon he would pause, stamp his foot, and mutter a hasty imprecation, which was not more than half audible; and, at the conclusion, as he handed the letter back to Orange-graft, he exclaimed:—"Well, sir, and how have you determined to proceed?"

"I wait for your direction, my lord!" replied Orange-graft, shaking with apprehension at the stern and angry glances of Narcissus.

Narcissus hesitated a moment; then, turning round to the terrified young lover, fixed his eyes full on *his*, laid a hand upon each shoulder, and in a low but deep tone commenced—"Orange-graft, have you spirit and courage to

brave all the anger and disappointment which can agitate the bosom of this perverse girl ! Can you defy her passion, and be the ostentatious principal in a great and decisive measure which is now in embryo in my mind ?”

“I can do much at your request !” returned Orangegrass, “but allow me to ask what is the object of this great and decisive measure ?”

To give you my daughter !” replied Narcissus—“and to rid myself of one of the greatest plagues of my existence. Now answer me !”

The eyes of Orangegrass were lighted up by a momentary fire, at the prospect of happiness thus held out to him.—“For that great object of my desires,” said he, “I would do any thing, every

thing—point out the path, my lord, and leave me to follow it. You shall not complain of my want of gallantry!”

“Then listen,” said Narcissus:—“go home, and let it be spread abroad that this marriage is interrupted and broken off, and take care not to disguise nor to conceal your departure. I would have it talked of every where. When you have shown your father’s vassals as well as mine that you have actually quitted my manor, put on a thick disguise, and travel back again *incognito*; do not let one individual discover your intention nor your person; and when you have reached this manor again, I will dismiss all this girl’s attendants, who are no better than they should be, and give up her house and bring her home with me to mine. You know the new mansion I am building in Airsor Park. Cran-

meadow Lodge is nearly completed, and thither I will send her, under a guard of eight of my soldiers, who shall have orders to coincide with any plans of yours ; although I would not recommend any violence on your part, until I have tried it on mine. We will get a priest to come to Cranmeadow Lodge, and I should imagine we can have no difficulty in compelling her then by menaces, or inducing her by promises, to consent to the ceremony. But if this should fail, nothing will remain but for you to carry off the girl by main force to your own country, and marry her there."

" I will abide by your directions, sir," returned Orangegrass—" but I may, after all, have some trouble to keep her and her mother from each other."

" Nothing more easy!" exclaimed

Narcissus—"nothing on earth more easy. Use a little salutary coercion; lock up your wife, and, if her mother should have the impudence to come upon your manor in pursuit of her, *lock her up also*, and be assured of no ill consequence from me. To get rid of one will be a great happiness to me; but to be freed from the plague of both would certainly make me the proudest and most comfortable man in the manor.—What say you to my plans, Orangegraft?"

"The only part as to which I feel any hesitation," answered Orangegraft—"is the practicability of them. I am ready to run any risks in the experiment, and I sincerely hope the result may be satisfactory to us both. I will abide by your directions respecting Lady Charlotte, but how can I consent to lock up the

mother of her I love, and that for no other offence than the very natural, although in your lordship's eyes very heinous, offence of wishing to see her daughter: I fear I cannot accomplish it."

"Why, thine is no better than the heart of a poor whining, love-sick, pining girl!" cried Narcissus, endeavouring to hide the emotions of indignation which swelled in his bosom—"What is the relationship between mother and daughter to thee! Thou wilt have gained thy wife, and what further wouldst thou have? I advise thee for thine own benefit as much as mine: for, admit the visits of the mother, and she will teach her girl a pretty lesson of behaviour to her husband. Dost thou not know, boy, that a key is the best security for a wife's honesty? Keep her isolated from all the world, and then thou needst not fear

any plotting against thy honour or thy happiness."

"But had you always locked up her mother, my lord," replied Orangegrass, "you could not have managed to *cook* up a charge of infidelity against her, as a ground for getting rid of her, when tired of her company. And should I feel a similar inclination, I shall be equally at a loss to manage the matter, unless I allow to her free ingress and egress, and plenty of opportunities of *horning* me, if she should feel that way inclined, after we have been married a few years."

"Thou art but a silly blockhead after all," said Narcissus, "and I almost repent my choice of a son-in-law. Do, however, just as you please, so you manage to get the girl out of my manor,

and it must be my care to prevent her mother from following her ; for asunder they must be kept, or else not content with *horning* you, they may perhaps take into their heads to conspire against me. I am not the credulous slave of woman that you appear to be, Orange-graft."

Here the conversation ended, and Orangegraft was better pleased with the result than Narcissus, although the latter felt a certain satisfaction at the idea of subduing his daughter's obduracy, and of separating her from those connections, to the influence of which he attributed all her present ill-behaviour to him. Yes, all which she had done against his will—all her pertinacious impertinence and vexatious opposition he had no doubt originated with her mother, whose sole object he considered it to be to thwart

him in all his projects and undertakings. Orangeraft was elated at the prospect of obtaining Lady Charlotte, and as to the means by which this was to be done, that was merely a secondary consideration. Her commendation of his person, added to his own natural vanity, satisfied him in his own opinion that he possessed the capability of making her happy, and whether her happiness was the consequence of her own voluntary desire, or whether it was forced upon her, it would still be happiness; and he had no doubt he should be enabled, after the obtainment of her, to reconcile her to him for any measures he might feel himself urged to pursue, to obtain her. He did not derive much satisfaction from the temporary kind of advice given to him by Narcissus, respecting the mother of Lady Charlotte, but contented himself with deciding that he could act as

would best please himself. Narcissus, on the other hand, was very ill satisfied with the indecision of Orangegrass, and his indisposition to go to the lengths which he could have wished him respecting the mother of his daughter. He would have given half he possessed to have ridden himself of this plague, and he was not in the least scrupulous as to the best mode of accomplishing his designs. He resolved, however, in the first place, to assist Orangegrass off with his daughter, and, this done, then to concert some measures for the further mortification of his wife, since he seemed fully determined, if possible, to break her heart with the club of persecution, before the chief tenants should have time to carry into effect his wished-for divorce, and thus to rid himself of his troubles altogether.

The conversation with Orangegrass, however, had on the whole put Narcissus out of tune to play the lover, and as he was obliged to assume a behaviour of something more than common civility towards Lady Longbonnet, he laid his passions and temper under some restraint, and endeavoured to copy the character of a lover which he could not originate. Her ladyship was pre-disposed to think favourably of his efforts, and, therefore, overlooked the little embarrassments and awkwardness into which his absence or confusion of mind frequently led him, and gave him full credit for all the ardor of feelings which he failed to express either in his words or his actions. Now and then, it is true, he ventured to embody in language his anticipations of enjoyment, when with her ladyship, he should be enabled to range the silver streams of flowery fields

from morn to night, or when wearied of rural scenery, and anxious to rove amidst the splendors of art, they might illuminate the magnificent abodes of wealth and fashion with their presence, lead down the mazy dance, or revel in all the voluptuousness of pleasure, and when a race of young lords should spring from their loins to bless the manor. Yes, gentle reader, this Narcissus, who at the age of fifty-two was in his dotage in point of physical ability, could sagely and seriously look forward to young shoots springing from his loins; and what is still more strange, yet not more strange than true, Lady Longbonnet, a lovely young female, just twenty-three, in the bloom of youthful beauty, with all her passions and inclinations in full force and play, could seriously listen to, and appear to be pleased with, this

tissue of absurdity. We do not presume to say that her ladyship had received any other evidence of the incapacity of Narcissus than that which was evident to her visual faculty, from his bloated countenance and dissipation-worn frame, but these symptoms ought to have been sufficient to give the lie to his tongue, when it presumed to dwell upon such visionary pictures of the fancy. Perhaps, indeed, she knew the futility of his anticipations, but interest kept her from betraying her real feelings on the subject; her views probably only extended to the situation of the wife of Narcissus, the mistress of Fever-isle, and she was perfectly indifferent as to the issue which might spring from his loins, the more especially as it was a prevailing custom amongst the wives of the principal tenantry not invariably to

look to their husbands for their issue, but to gambol with any other individual who might have merit enough in their eyes to deserve a participation in their favours.

Lady Longbonnet might be aware that *she* should have the power to give a heir to Fever-isle without the aid of Narcissus, should she feel thus inclined; and this idea might have had considerable influence in raising a smile upon her countenance, when she received and replied to the effervescences of his folly, or of his duplicity. The same motive of self-interest induced her to return all the attentions of Narcissus with such a benevolent kindness, that when, after the journey and voyage of the day, they returned to the castle of Narcissus, the deputy-lord was so completely intoxicated, that it was not without betraying

his inebriety to his visitors, by a thousand maniac fancies, that he contrived to get through the evening.

CHAPTER XVI.

Narcissus sheweth his Preparations to his Visitors—their Astonishment—Dissertation on Scribblers—Welcome Intruder—Love Scene.

THE reader will now perhaps be anxious to learn how the Controller of Freeze-gaul was satisfied with the Fever-islanders, and what was his opinion of their habits, manners, and government. Of the male tenants he had formed very contemptible opinions in general, for he considered them as little better than a superior species of asses, who were ob-

stinate when ever urged against their dispositions; and who could bray prodigiously loud. 'Of their possession of these qualities he received daily some new proofs; so pertinacious were they in their curiosity, that from morn to night in groups of hundreds, they would stand and stare round the windows where the Controller and his sister resided, and their patience seemed only to increase in proportion to the delay which occurred; and as to their vocal talents, his lordship and his co-visitors could not show their illustrious countenances without the vassals giving pretty unequivocal proofs that they understood the exercise of the vulgar tongue to perfection, and were equally ready with their huzzas to a great lord or a wild beast, or a mountebank at a fair. From these unquestionable evidences of their wisdom, his lordship

would naturally conclude that the tenantry of this manor were the most *sagacious* and *enlightened*, as well as the most *hospitable* people in the universe. With regard to Narcissus, his lordship had formed a most exalted opinion of his virtues and lordly qualities of mind; considering him as a pattern of gracefulness, the pink of good breeding, and the *daffy-down-dilly* of wit and good humour; and Narcissus, doubtless, conscious of his own elevated situation in the good opinion of the Contrôller as well as the Lord of Brushall, spared no pains nor exertions to establish himself there, foregoing a great number of his old habits, and appearing to accommodate his manners and pursuits as far as could reasonably be expected, to the manners and pursuits of those who had conferred on him and his manor the

distinguished honour of a visit and a residence of some weeks.

Narcissus had been for some weeks busily employed in the erection of temples and various other structures in the lawn behind his castle, which lawn was separated from the neighbouring park by a high wall of brick ; and two or three days after their arrival, he requested these lordly guests to accompany him in the survey of the magnificent preparations which had been commenced with a view to do honour to their visit. All that had been completed Narcissus pointed out to their admiration, and filled up every hiatus in the buildings with glowing description of those things which as yet were only built in the architect's brain. "Here," said he, pointing to a lofty building, with a crest of many angles and a lofty apex—"here is my

temple erected to the Goddess of Pleasure—here shall rosy Mirth sit and carouse the gloomy night away—here shall fantastic delight assume a thousand shapes—and many an earthly Hebe shall fill the flowing and inspiring nectar to us the gods of the creation. Care and sorrow and business of every description shall be denied an entrance into this hallowed abode, and every countenance which should so far forget the homage due to it as to wear a frown, shall thenceforth be banished for ever.”

The foreign lords, unused to this elevated language, could scarcely give credit to their ears, as Narcissus pointed out these pleasures, which outvied the most magnificent splendors of oriental ostentation, and the Controller, with an air of surprise and astonishment, replied—“ Great sir, these daily dis-

plays of the surpassing magnificence of your ideas and your power, are sufficient to paralyze wonder, and leave the utmost stretch of astonishment far behind. Gods ! why the sum which this must cost will exceed all the rental of my manor, at least *twenty thousand* rubles I'll be bound."

"Twenty thousand !" exclaimed Narcissus smiling at the narrow conceptions and limited understanding of his visitor—"Add twenty to that, my lord, and double the whole, and then you will be within one half of the expence which these metamorphoses will cost."

"Not your lordship, surely ?" asked both the guests, in a consonant tone of amazement and anxiety blended.

"Oh, no !" replied Narcissus ; —"I

manage these things better. My limited income would ill support all this magnificence ; did I not apply to my tenants pretty often for contributions to second my views, many of my most illustrious projects would perish before they could be carried into effect, and be only the still-born offspring of my brain. No, no, Sirs ; I project and give orders, and my advisers look to the payment. The money, the money, my good lords, must come out of the pockets of my good, easy, credulous, and foolishly generous vassals, who think themselves honoured above all other vassals in being allowed, now and then, to contribute pretty liberally towards the comforts and enjoyments of their deputy-lord."

The visitors lifted up their hands and their eyes in silent admiration of the

good-natured disposition of the Fever-islanders, and in amazement of the ample and inexhaustible means they must possess to enable them to honour such enormous draughts upon their fidelity and affection. "Good Lord!" said the Lord of Brushall, "one would think it impossible they could act so liberally. Methinks, they must sometimes look a little blue at such expenditures."

"Why, I'll tell your lordship," said Narcissus—"the vassals themselves, generally speaking, are a set of the easiest most simple fellows in existence; and would *bleed*, that is, part with their money, with the utmost readiness and good temper, on all occasions, and to any extent; but there are some few amongst them who have been cursed with a sort of *cacœthes scribendi*, a nasty troublesome *itch of writing*, which sets them on

continually to pick holes in my actions, and by some means or other they have contrived to make great numbers of the tenantry dissatisfied with me; and when these self-conceited fellows find that I come upon the vassals for any fresh sums of money, they fall on my character and conduct like so many tigers, and make such mince-meat of me, that, by heaven, the sweating of mind that I undergo deserves a devilish deal more cash than I gain after all. And these scribblers increase every day, and get so very impudent, that they will not scruple to attack me with as little delicacy as they would a swindler, swearing, that as it is their money which I spend from day to day, and as I am only in fact their steward, although in name their lord, they have an undoubted right to look into the manner in which I spend what they give me, and to bring me to a

debtor and creditor account for every sixpence they advance."

"But we manage these things better in our manors," replied the Controller; "for if we have less wealth, we know how to bridle the insolence of our vassals. Cannot you impose a check on this licentiousness—upon this inveterate habit of calling you to book for every action of your life?"

"Alas!" said Narcissus—"what is there that can be done, which I have not endeavoured to do? I have pursued those scribbling scoundrels from one end of my manor to the other. I have cut off the ears of some, plunged others into dungeons, and shut them out from all the wholesome and cheering charities of day; others I have borne down with immense fines, and striven to bury

them beneath an accumulated mass of ruin and ignominy. But my insolent vassals, with an indecent obstinacy peculiarly their own, have followed them to their dungeons and rewarded them with smiles and shouts and other tokens of applause, such as those which they heap upon you ; and those whom I have fined they have protected harmless, and paid for them the price of their redemption : and they have uniformly condemned me and those to whom I have committed the power of punishing my contumelious vassals, so that in casting up the balance, I have found that, although I have revenged myself on individuals, I sunk myself very considerably in the public opinion ; and thus, to use a very common expression in my manor, in fact, ‘ cut off my nose to spite my face.’ What more, my lord, could you have done ?”

The Controller was puzzled for a reply. "Let us proceed, my lord," said he; "you are certainly the lord of a most independent set of tenants, and, if you consult your own interests, it is plain that you ought not to run too perversely against their inclinations."

Narcissus then led his guests round his gay groupe of ball-rooms and supper-rooms, through his conservatories and refectories, and a vast number of grand appendages to his castle; and then taking them through a private door, into his park, he began to expatiate on the singular alterations which he meditated there. "Yonder," said he—"over my fish-pond, I mean to erect a sumptuous bridge, perfectly a Chinese model; I will have pagodas and towers, and I will brilliantly illuminate them by night, and the splendour of my bridge shall be

sounded, not only from one end of my manor to the other, but also round every other manor within a thousand leagues of the contrary shore of Broad ditch."

"Bravo!" cried the Lord of Brushall—"and pray for what purpose is yonder capacious spot of ground marked out, and covered with timber?"

"Oh, that, my lord, is designed for a most splendid fane!" returned Narcissus—"It will be a most gigantic moving tower, on which it is my intention to display a vast number of the most superb fire-works. I will then, in miniature, act over sieges and storms and bombardments. I will have all the horrors of war in epitome, and in the midst of the thunders of my artillery, I will, by a secret and ingenious contrivance, put an instant stop to the uproar, and succeed it by a

brilliant description of peace.—What say your lordships to this design? It is entirely and exclusively my own.”

“Illustrious as its inventor!” exclaimed the Controller. Lady Longbonnet, who had just come up in time to hear the last declaration, joined in the warm praises bestowed by her brother and the Lord of Brushall; and Narcissus felt himself in imagination as high above his lordly visitors as Michael and Gabriel, the celebrated archangels, were supposed to be superior to the common groupe of angels. “And the most splendid room in yon stately temple,” said he, taking the fair hand of her ladyship, “I dedicate to thee, sweet loveliness; and, in compliment to thy charms, the edifice shall be called the Temple of Venus; and more honoured will it be than those which the ancients

erected to their goddess of beauty, for here will my divinity herself be present, to add a grace, a dignity, and a lustre, to the sacred shrine !”

Lady Longbonnet smiled most unutterable things in return for this very imposing compliment ; and, indeed, her ladyship could scarce do less than imitate the kindness of that Goddess to whom Narcissus had compared her in beauty. “ Alas ! my lord,” said she, throwing a vast deal of signification into her words and her looks ; “ you know well how to command the powers of language. I am little used to these flatteries, and you must attribute it to my ignorance, and not to my inclination, that I forbear to make a suitable return.”—As she said this, she gave to Narcissus a benignant squeeze of the hand, which in stronger language than the tongue

could convey, flattered his pride and affection.

The colloquy of looks, and squeezes, and sighs, were seen by the Controller ; and as they had now returned through the private door, and were once more in the garden, he drew the Lord of Brushall on one side, and leading him through a different path, left his sister and Narcissus together to pursue their wooings, uninterrupted by the presence of those who would have operated as a restraint upon the freedom of their intercourse.

Narcissus saw the design of his visitors, and determined not to let slip an opportunity so favourable to his wishes. Gently taking the hand of Lady Longbonnet, he drew her arm within his own, and, leading her to an elegant and retired seat, under a spacious awning, he

placed her on the couch, and seated himself by her side, delicately pressed her hand to his lips, and ventured to whisper in her ear the tender tale of affection hitherto untold ! “ Loveliest ! sweetest ! most exalted of women ! ” said he ; “ Narcissus looks to thee for all which can render life estimable, for all his future hopes and joys ; and humbly lays himself, his dignity, his manor, his vassals, and all he can command, at the feet of her whom he adores ! ”

Her ladyship hid her face for a moment, but resisted not the renewed salute of her hand which succeeded this eloquent and melting effluence of soul. For some moments, however, she failed to find words to give expression to her feelings, and when at length reluctant language came, it came hesitatingly, as though dragged forth rather by the

emergency of the occasion, than instigated by any voluntary impulse.—“My Lord—I am sensible—that is—I properly feel—the value of your lordship’s condescension. I will candidly confess, my lord—that your graces, and manners, and the qualities I have discovered in you, have given you a high place in my affections—that is in my esteem—which I shall always be anxious to acknowledge.”

Narcissus could scarcely wait for the termination of the sentence, before, catching her ladyship in his arms, he impressed a dozen kisses on her lips, with an ardour well calculated to alarm her, and broke out into a most incoherent rhapsody, full of gratitude for the past and promise for the future.

Her ladyship listened and believed all

he said, and, if the listening breeze tells the truth, they interchanged their protestations of fidelity on the spot, and agreed that Lady Longbonnet should leave the manor with her brother, merely for the purpose of paying a short visit to her family, while Narcissus and his advisers endeavoured to break the ties which bound him to the luckless Germania. This plan arranged, the lovers, happy in each other's promises, joined the Controller and the Lord of Brushall, and proceeded to take a share in the noble entertainment which was prepared for them in the castle, and to cement the young affection by inspiring libations of the richest viands which the wealth of the manor could procure.

CHAPTER XVII.

Discussions in the Council of Vassals respecting Germania—The Opinions and Independence of Turnyou and Brownloaf—The Flummery and Assurance of Calderagh, and the ultimate Disposal of the Business.

THE correspondence between Puggilla and Germania, in which the former had desired the latter never again to come to her parties, had caused no slight noise nor confusion throughout the manor; and in the council of tenants there was much discussion respecting it. One Melthume rose in the assembly of the manor, and demanded that the lord

should no longer interfere to prevent respect and homage from being paid to the wife of his choice, and attempted to induce the other tenants to agree with him in a recommendation to Narcissus to behave better to her for the future, and to take measures immediately to make Puggilla receive her at her castle, at her next public party. The rest of the tenantry seemed very well disposed to support Melthume in his proposal, when the friends of Narcissus begged of them to postpone all consideration of the subject for a few days, trusting that it was very likely some arrangements might, in the mean time, be made, to do away the cause of the complaint, and the ground of the proposed proceeding altogether. Now, in common understanding, this might appear to intimate that Puggilla and Narcissus were very much inclined to alter their opinions as to the

exclusion of Germania from all the parties of her mother-in-law, and accordingly so it was interpreted by a great many of the vassals, who anxiously looked every morning to find some order issued for the admission of Germania to the parties. The more sagacious, or better informed, however, thought otherwise, and boldly said that the advisers of Narcissus only sought to put off the discussion of the business from day to day, by means of false promises and unsound protestations, until the noble visitors should have taken their departure from the manor, and that, as soon as their backs were turned, they would begin to equivocate, to shuffle from all they had said, and to snap their fingers in the faces of those who advocated Germania's cause.

Of the number of those who held this

latter opinion were Broggam and Brown-loaf, and one Turnyou, who was a very keen ready reckoner, having dabbled much in accounts, and being usually called as clever a fellow at adding up a column of fractions as any person the manor could produce. But it was not only to fractions in figures that his ability extended, for he was withal to the full as clever in finding out fractions in the conduct of Narcissus and his friends, and when he did discover them, he knew pretty well how to make the most of them. This tenant had united himself to the two others to whom we have alluded, with a full and vigorous determination to defend all the rights and privileges of Germania, as long as he could exercise his tongue, and in despite of all the interested and malignant opposition which he anticipated. His talents rendered him an object of apprehension to

those whose measures he opposed ; for, as they had recently had but a limited portion of wisdom on their side, they were particularly vulnerable to their acute and discerning opponents. His promptitude of observation, also, was equalled if not excelled by the sharpness of his tongue, and the manly independence of his spirit, which possessed the power of awing before it silenced, and of silencing even where it had not yet convinced. Such was the individual who had joined himself to Broggam and Brownloaf, and who, when the measure of delaying the discussion was proposed, exclaimed, " I would not consent to the delay of a moment ; for every moment which passes over Germania's unredressed wrongs adds materially to the insults which have been offered to her, and conveys a still but cutting censure on the lukewarmness of her advocates. It is

never too early to redress injuries ; it is never too soon to bind up the wounds of innocence, inflicted by the poisoned arrows of malignity."

The advisers of Narcissus, however, still continued determined to resist the hurrying forward of the business for the present ; they contended that they had a right to expect the courtesy they asked, and that certain arrangements being most assuredly in progress, it was but just that sufficient time for their completion should be allowed. At the same time they argued against any pretended right which Germania might imagine that she possessed, of admission to Puggilla's parties ; contending that if such a privilege were to be allowed, it would be granted as a matter of kindness, and not as if it were called for by necessity. They censured the indecent

anxiety which the more independent part of the tenants displayed respecting the condition of Germania, and attached to their measures and their motions a language full of anger and invective, denominating them factious, dissatisfied, and hostile to the wishes of Narcissus, and to the best interests of the manor, and declaring that they were always on the look-out for some handle on which their malignity might take hold for the purpose of exciting dissensions throughout the manor, and of sowing misunderstandings between lord and tenant.

To these charges and assertions Turn-you replied, that the only enemies to the peace of Narcissus and the welfare of the manor were those who created and cherished domestic feuds in the family of the lord, who endeavoured to fasten

base and unfounded calumnies upon the character of Germania, thus wickedly slandering her who ought to have been considered sacred in their hands, and who had a legitimate right to their support instead of their persecution. He declared that nothing which malice could ascribe to him would induce him to relax in his defence of injured innocence, and bitterly complained that these were not merely times of wanton and unauthorized extravagance, but of violent and outrageous persecution; and that such was the character, and such the example of the lord and his advisers, that, throughout the vassals vice and virtue would henceforward be confounded in their nature, and that wickedness, as it was encouraged in the castle and among the higher orders of the tenantry, would diffuse itself from the fountain through the various channels which ran

through the inferior classes of the people.

Broggam and Brownloaf warmly supported this argument, the latter declaring, that the higher orders of the tenantry presented to view neither more nor less than one huge sink of iniquity, and that the character of the deputy-lord was more tarnished by his domestic misconduct than even by the errors he committed in his management of the estate. Upon his advisers, however, all the responsibility would attach ; it was their backs which must support the burden of the impolitic schemes which had been carried on, and the mischievous consequences which might, and in all probability would, ensue. For his part he declared, weak though he was in influence, he felt strong in the justice of the cause which he advocated, and he

now and at all times, would enter his most decided protest against any thing like a compromise of the legitimate rights of Germania, or a procrastination of the justice due to her.

Broggam with equal fervor, opposed the delay of a subject of so much importance, but notwithstanding their eloquence, Melthume was induced to postpone his demand of a recognition of Germania's claims to the privileges of her high rank, bowing, as he said he did, to the wishes of those who were better practised in the mode of urging forward matters of this high importance than himself, and who recommended it to him to alter the shape of his proposition, and to bring it forward again in a more regular, and, consequently, less objectionable form, declaring that they were disposed to give him every

support whenever they could be enabled to do so, without injuring their own views or the consistency of their public conduct. Melthume submitted to the force of these observations, and declared himself willing to delay any further proceedings for the space of two days, in order to give to the advisers of Narcissus and Puggilla time to revise their conduct, and to make some arrangement for the satisfaction of Germania.

At the expiration of the time appointed, an interval of much anxiety to the Fever-islanders, who, to a man, were disposed to take such a very active part in the vindication of the Lady Germania, Melthume again rose in the assembly, and said that as no steps had been taken to his knowledge, for the amelioration of the condition of Lady Germania, he was determined, unless some

solid reasons could be advanced to divert him from his intention, to proceed immediately with the demand which he had submitted on a former evening to the notice of the council, and which he had foolishly consented to procrastinate, against the wishes and suggestions of those whom subsequent circumstances had proved to be better judges of the business than himself. He was resolved, however, if no steps had privately been adopted to do away with the ground of the motion, to persevere then, and not to stop short, until he had compelled the advisers of Narcissus to produce evidence to prove Germania unworthy of the protection of the manor, or had replaced her character on that elevation upon which it once stood, the admiration of the world, and the pride and glory of the tenantry, over whom she was called hither to preside.

Upon this, up rose Calderagh, one of the advisers of Narcissus, a most self-conceited youth, who, by means of his assurance, and a variety of other analogous qualifications, had risen very high, of late, in the good opinion of his lord, and was indeed his public *fac totum*, and the mouth-piece through which he conveyed all his sentiments and determinations to the vassals. This man had been so accustomed to rebuffs and reproofs, that he was grown quite callous to their blows, insomuch that, instead of bruising or injuring his feelings, they recoiled from him like a *five's-ball* from a brick building. Indeed, he was so careless of them now, that he would not shrink from them, but as they flew *thick* and *three-fold* around him, used to smile with the utmost contempt and indifference at the futility of their efforts

who were so silly as to waste their powder and shot upon him.

Up rose this mass of importance and vanity, and began to assume very high airs and a very lofty tone. He wondered very much what business the tenantry had with the domestic affairs of Narcissus ; or why, because he chose to quarrel with his wife, they, forsooth, must interfere between man and woman, and by their ridiculous attempt to patch up the breach, only widen it and make it more irreparable. He could not conceive why the vassals made a point of leaving their wits outside the door, whenever they came into the council-room, and he was very certain they did so, or they would never make it their constant aim to pull down the character of their lord and his advisers. As to Germania, she had no right at all, she

had nothing in the world but her *chemise*, as was the case with every other married woman, and whatever might be given to her, it would solely emanate from the liberal spirit which always actuated her illustrious husband on all occasions. As to the parties of Puggilla, she had no business there without an invitation, and, whatever she or the vassals might think of it, there she would not be admitted, and this was to be understood as a final answer. If she had a wish for a little more money to live upon, there was no sort of objection to increase her income, although, like an extravagant woman, she had run her husband into debt once or twice, to a pretty heavy amount, and he had discharged the demands upon her, but he was determined to put a notice in all the newspapers, warning the vassals not to trust her, on his account, for he would

no longer be responsible for her debts. And having said all this, which he had said indeed out of courtesy, for the council had no business to expect so much, he should sit himself down in his place.

As soon as he had done, he immediately acted upon the wise resolution with which he had concluded, and sat himself down without ceremony, while Brownloaf, who, for some time, had been scarcely able to master his indignation at the contemptuous mode of speech adopted by Calderagh, got up, and began to assault the consequential youth with the utmost boldness and decision, maintaining that Germania had rights and privileges which ought to have protected her from the indecent scurrility with which her name had just been mentioned. He supposed, however, that Calderagh had his cue, and was

not only sanctioned in his impertinence, but perhaps rewarded for it. He himself protested against giving a sum of money to Germania merely for the purpose of bribing her to silence respecting her own feelings and expectations. She would, sooner or later, become the lady of the manor, and then, perhaps, the worthy tenant who had just treated her so unceremoniously would be very anxious to eat his own words. If not, he neither envied him his gallantry nor his generosity, for they were neither of them very valuable. He hoped Melthume would now go through the business, and that by their decision, the council would prove to Narcissus and to the manor, that they were determined not to allow *ducks* and *drakes* to be made of the character of a virtuous lady of the first rank, who, independent of her high situation, as a stranger was entitled to their protection.

Melthume listened more attentively to Calderagh than to Browloaf, and intimated, that if he were certain that it was the intention of Narcissus to increase the allowance of Germania, he might probably be induced again to consent to a postponement, notwithstanding all the very excellent arguments of the latter gentleman; for he thought, that by giving her more money, Narcissus would convince the world that, although he might have no objection if she were gone to another world, he did not absolutely desire nor design publicly to starve her to death. He therefore begged of Calderagh to be very candid about what was purposed to be done, and he would then come to some decision as to what he would do.

Calderagh answered, that he was commanded to say, that Narcissus in-

tended to augment Germania's income next week, provided her friends, as they called themselves, did not bother him with any resolutions, nor addresses, nor remonstrances, while the lordly visitors, who had honoured his castle with their presence condescended to stay upon the manor. The moment their backs should be turned, he pledged himself to come forward with a very handsome proposition on the subject ; and this was all he could at present say to the council about it.

Upon this Melthume, who, it seems, ~~was at best a~~ poor irresolute, unstable sort of a chap, consented to put off his demands for a few days longer ; and with this decision Calderagh expressed himself very well satisfied : and here the matter dropped for the present.

CHAPTER XVIII.

In which the Author introduces two Ladies of great Fashion and Influence in the Manor, and detailleth a curious Conversation which they held with Lady Longbonnet.

LADY Longbonnet had made up her mind to give a grand party in honour of the Ladies Jerry and Heartshallow, whom Narcissus had introduced to her as ladies of much wit and attraction, and whose society he wished her ladyship to cultivate. Now, gentle reader, it may, perhaps, have suggested itself to thee,

before I give thee an insight into their characters, that, although these favoured females might possibly be two of the most amiable and virtuous beings which could be selected out of the female part of the tenantry, they had not the public reputation of being a bit better than they ought to be. It was very broadly insinuated among the vassals, that it was owing entirely to the vile intrigues of the former, that Narcissus had sent Germania out of his castle, and had consequently pursued her with such unchanging inveteracy ; and, as to the latter, the same scandalous lady, called common Rumour, did most loudly and solemnly aver, that she had very kindly taken the place of Germania, in order to drive away cares from the bosom of Narcissus by day, and ugly dreams from his brains by night ; and if so, she was a lady of extraordinary charity, and did

indeed well merit his favours and regard.

To these two ladies he had imparted his intentions with regard to Lady Longbonnet, and, no sooner did they understand the probability that she might at some future time become their mistress, than their eyes were immediately opened to their own interest; for there was in all classes of society throughout the manor, and in both sexes, an astonishing propensity to court acquaintance with those, from whom they might hope to derive benefit. These females instantly determined not to lose a moment in paying their respects in a quarter which held out such promising prospects, especially as Narcissus had hinted that their attentions to the illustrious stranger would be an acceptable tribute to himself. When great men drop such

hints as these, it is astonishing with what assiduity inferior personages understand and act upon them; scarcely two hours had elapsed after this expression of the wishes of Narcissus, before the Ladies Jerry and Heartshallow were mounted in their gayest carriages and on their road to the residence of Lady Longbonnet.

Her ladyship was well informed of the rank and character of her visitants, and therefore gave them a very gracious reception, in order that she might favourably impress her own image upon their breasts, for she very probably recollected what mischiefs had accrued to poor Germania from not having sufficiently pleased the one, and she doubtless did not forget the influence which the other possessed over Narcissus, and these sentiments probably regulated her conduct.

"Bless me!" cried Heartshallow, "your ladyship looks quite elegant this morning. Has your ladyship heard the news to-day?"

To which her ladyship replying in the negative, the talkative Heartshallow recommenced. "Good Lord, my dear Lady Longbonnet, why that little saucy minx, Lady Charlotte, has behaved so extremely ill to Lady Puggilla, that I can't tell how the business will end. Really my feelings were so monstrously shocked when I first heard it, that I was obliged to fly to my *eau de luce* for support under it."

"*Eau de luce!*" exclaimed Lady Jerry, "why, my dear Lady Heartshallow, I absolutely *evaporated* a whole half-pint before I could compose myself."

Lady Longbonnet stared with evident symptoms of surprize, while Heartshallow went on. "Now, my lady, as I have had the account from the very best authority, if you will allow me the distinguished honour of communicating it to your ladyship, I shall feel most sensibly——"

"Not a word, not a word, of obligation, my dear Lady Heartshallow," interrupted Lady Longbonnet, "none can doubt the authenticity of *your* information. The first official organ, I am sure, is not half such good authority as your ladyship's simple and unsupported word of honour."

"Lord, how elegant!" cried Heartshallow, hiding her face for a moment with her handkerchief, "well, I protest, my lady, you do so far exceed us Fever-

islanders in your politeness, that I feel myself at an immeasurable distance behind you ; but, my lady, I shall make short of my story. Lady Puggilla, who is the gentlest, tenderest, kindest lady in the world, except your ladyship, merely went to ask Lady Charlotte why it was she took it into her head to give poor young Orangegrass his dismissal all in a moment without any notice ; and a very proper question I think it was."

"Oh, very proper indeed !" exclaimed Lady Longbonnet, moving her chair a little nearer to Heartshallow, "mighty proper indeed ! Well, and what then ?"

"I was going to tell your ladyship what followed," resumed Heartshallow. "No sooner had Lady Puggilla asked the question, in her most gracious manner, than Lady Charlotte's face grew

red as a fire coal, and putting her arms akimbo, so as this, said she, "I shall not tell you my reasons, you may depend upon it, my lady; for, you are nothing better than an eaves-dropper and a tale-bearer, and you have no business to trouble yourself at all about my affairs, and my liking and disliking, for I am determined to give you no sort of satisfactory answer."

"Amazing assurance!" cried Lady Longbonnet. "And what in the world could Lady Puggilla say to all these virulent and shameful insults!"

"I'll tell your ladyship—When Lady Charlotte finished, Lady Puggilla, of course, was very much agitated, as your ladyship or I should have been at such strange and impertinent behaviour, and absolutely fell backwards into a chair,

on which Lady Charlotte went to the side-board, and——.”

“Excuse me, my dear Heartshallow,” interrupted Lady Jerry, “I think it was to her work-table that Lady Charlotte went for the——.”

“Your pardon, Jerry, it was the side-board, for I have it from such excellent authority, that I am sure I cannot possibly be mistaken on the subject. Lady Charlotte went to the sideboard, my lady, and snatched up a glass of water, and, instead of applying it in a gentle, filial-like kind of way, would your ladyship believe it! she absolutely dashed the whole of it into Lady Puggilla’s face, whom she thought quite gone beyond hearing or feeling, and cried out in a low voice, “there, you good-for-nothing old woman, take that, and learn

to trouble yourself with my business again !”

“ I am absolutely thunderstruck !” cried Lady Langbonnet. “ I never in my life heard of any violence to come up to this.—Go on, my lady.”

“ Lady Puggilla was not so insensible but she could hear what followed this violent assault, and she immediately jumped up, thinking she should be murdered in a minute, and caught hold of the arms of Lady Charlotte, with no other intention than to prevent further mischief, and cried out very loudly for assistance, but no one came, which plainly shows that it was a conspiracy to insult her ladyship ; but Lady Charlotte being stronger than Lady Puggilla extricated her arms, and fetching the good old lady a ———, desired her to walk

about her business, without any further delay, for that she had no wish to receive visits from persons who only wished to pry into her secrets for the purpose of doing her mischief."

"Now, my dear Lady Longbonnet," exclaimed Lady Jerry, as Heartshallow threw herself on the sofa to recover herself after the fatigue of telling such a monstrously shocking story, "did you ever hear of any conduct so shameful and so degrading as this of that young virago, Lady Charlotte?"

"Never, I protest," exclaimed Lady Longbonnet. "I declare I am more shocked at the relation than ever I was at any circumstance in my life before. But what in the world could induce her to throw off all respect and decency in this sort of way I cannot conceive!"

“ Oh, my lady,” returned Jerry, “ there is no difficulty in that at all. Your ladyship must know that there has been a great coolness for some time, between Lady Puggilla and that artful Germania, and I have no doubt that the latter has been pretty well poisoning the mind of her daughter against the worthy, good old lady, and I should not wonder a bit, for my part, if the mother and daughter have not been plotting this insult for a long time, and only waited for a favourable opportunity to carry it into execution. For my part, I don’t wonder at any thing they do, and all my surprise is, that Lady Puggilla contrived to get off with so little injury as she did.”

“ ’Tis all true, I assure your ladyship,” added Heartshallow, “ Jerry and I talked it all over very early this morning, and the more I think of it, the more

I am convinced that this wicked Germania is at the bottom of the whole transaction ; Lord, your ladyship does not know that woman."

" I am lost in astonishment !" replied Lady Longbonnet, " for I had really sometimes thought Germania a very unfortunate and persecuted woman, and more than once or twice I do assure you I have been very sincerely disposed to commiserate her situation."

" Commiserate !" exclaimed both the ladies in a breath, and after a moment's pause, Jerry giving precedence to Heartshallow, the latter went on. " Why, my dear Longbonnet, you don't know her tricks and her character, I do assure you, ladyship ; but Jerry can tell you better than any other person in the world, things which it would shock your lady-

ship's ears to listen to, I do assure you. Come, Jerry, tell her ladyship what you saw when you used to be in the castle, before Narcissus separated himself from Germania.

Jerry put herself immediately into a talkative position, and seemed delighted with the task ; for the theme of scandalizing the unfortunate Germanja, was a subject which of all others she loved most, but she had only time to introduce the topic with a most flourishing and virulent philippic against the object of her malevolence, before she was interrupted by Lady Longbonnet, who exclaimed—
“ Nay, my dear Lady Jerry, I will not impose such a severe task upon you, as to place you under the painful necessity of dwelling on the black side of her character. It is painful enough for me also to know that I have been deceived,

without looking at all the faults which had hitherto escaped my notice. I am sure your ladyship's charitable disposition will feel pleasure that I relieved you from such an odious and uncongenial office as that of a slanderer."

Jerry, however, was not disposed to excuse her charitable feelings too much on this occasion, but rather felt disappointment that she could not be allowed to indulge a little delightful malevolence. She therefore protested over and over again that it would give her pleasure to inform her ladyship on any subject, and that it was indeed necessary for her ladyship to be fully acquainted with the character of Germania, before she could possibly be on her guard against her future behaviour, and two or three times she actually attempted to recommence the theme.

Heartshallow too, was not very well pleased at the pertinacity of Lady Longbonnet, and repeatedly offered her services to tell the tale, but Lady Longbonnet silenced her, by observing that she knew sufficient, since she could not doubt after the assertions of ladies of such rank and respectability, of the extent of Germania's impropriety of conduct, and that as she had no wish to receive any further information on the subject except from time, she trusted their ladyships would show a kind consideration for her feelings and sentiments, and cease to press the obnoxious subject.

“Your ladyship is too good for this world,” returned Heartshallow :—“I protest I am astonished at the greatness and benevolence of all your ladyship's sentiments—I would not wound your ears with the odious story of how she

intriguing with captain ———, and how she was caught in the ———."

"Hush, hush! for heaven's sake, my dear Lady Heartshallow," interrupted Lady Longbonnet (putting her hand before the mouth of the incorrigible gossip, to stop her progress)—"why you are really just doing what I wished most particularly that you would avoid. If you have any kind of respect for my feelings, I pray you not to indulge any more in these injurious insinuations, at least when I am present."

"My respect for your feelings, my dear Lady Longbonnet," returned Heartshallow, "swallows up every other consideration; and for worlds I would not again say a single word which could give offence to your ladyship. I hold your ladyship's good opinion, also, of

too high a value, to be thus lightly sported with, and I trust your ladyship will pardon me for giving way as I have done to the excess of my feelings, which it was impossible for me to restrain, when I call to mind all the vile assignations, and the shameless frolics, and the unblushing assurance, and ——."

"Again!" said Lady Longbonnet, interrupting the garrulous female, in a tone of much firmness, mingled with some displeasure—"surely, my dear lady, you must be intoxicated, in thus attempting to poison my mind against Germania. I pray you once more to cease this conversation, or to allow me, at least, the privilege of withdrawing into another apartment, until the tempest of your anger may have subsided."

Lady Heartshallow saw that she had

gone too far, and the same motive of interest, therefore, which induced her to obtrude herself into Lady Longbonnet's residence, now urged her to make the most abject apologies for the foolish intemperance of language into which she had been hurried.

"I forgive you," said Lady Longbonnet, stretching out her hand.—"I dare say, changing our situations, I might have gone to far greater lengths than your ladyship did, as my own feelings are very susceptible, and I always find a great difficulty in keeping them under proper restraint."

The ladies bowed with a great deal of gratitude, not unmixed with a considerable portion of mortification, at the idea, that they could not proceed to the full extent of their malignity against the ob-

ject of their hatred. Consoling their feelings, however, they made several unsuccessful attempts to introduce topics of a different complexion, but the task was too irksome, and they speedily took their leave.

CHAPTER XIX.

Detailing the Effect which the Conversation in the last Chapter produced upon the Mind of Lady Longbonnet—Anonymous Letter—Consultation thereupon—and Return of the Visitors.

No sooner had Lady Longbonnet's visitors taken their departure than she began to revolve in her mind the conversation which had just passed. She had before heard much of Germania's frailties, (to use the term which appeared to be adopted in the castle, when speaking of her,) and she had received all her information from a quarter in which no tenderness for her honour would operate

to render the tongue of her informers delicate on the subject. But she had also seen the statements which asserted that she was tried by a private but high tribunal, instituted by command of the lord of the manor, to investigate her conduct, and after perusing this acquittal, her ladyship naturally enough had dismissed from her mind all suspicions, which breathed upon her innocence. The language of Lady Heartshallow, however, had staggered her sentiments again, and she begun to imagine that Germania was not that unjustly persecuted and maligned personage which the tenantry endeavoured to make her out to be. She must be vile indeed before her own sex would find such a difficulty in restraining their indignant feelings from overflowing in expressions of the strongest and most elaborate invective.

With this impression upon her mind, Lady Longbonnet justified the conduct of Narcissus in determining to burst the ties which had united them, and to seek for domestic happiness in some other quarter. He was indeed an unfortunate man ; his happiness he seemed to have wrecked upon a worthless woman, (such was the reasoning of Lady Longbonnet, so poisoned was her mind against Germania by the artful insinuations of the serpents who had just stung her ladyship's ear,) and when the idea of it appeared to find a momentary refuge in the affection of a daughter, that suddenly proved treacherous and swallowed it up. Thus conjectured and reflected Lady Longbonnet ; and from justifying Narcissus, she proceeded very naturally to justify herself for listening to his professions, and accepting the tender of his affections. She could discover no

moral offence in her own conduct ; she merely collected the scattered relics of the heart of Narcissus, broken by ill-usage, and sought to unite and cement them by a binding affection ; and if she did not accept the office of the healer of his wounds, disposed as she was to feel regard for him, and to promote her own views of ambition, she considered that she could neither act morally nor politically right. An union with him would add materially to her own as well as the dignity of his family, and she saw for her part no ground on which she ought to reject it. Her meditations on this important subject she carried to her pillow with her, and, sooth to say, the idea of a new lover was too gratifying to be ousted even by the not inconsiderable influence of sleep itself.

The first beam of the rising sun had

scarcely thrown a lustre upon her bed, before her ladyship rose, for she was none of your delicate hot-bed namby-pamby sort of nymphs who cannot quit their pillow until the sun has passed his meridian, nor visit it again until he mounts his car for his daily drive—she was none of those who consider that life was only given to us to be squandered away in eating and drinking and in sleeping, and that they who did their duty in these important departments, were, in truth, the most illustrious of human beings. No, her ladyship had different ideas, and entertained different views of things; she considered that there were other pursuits in life, and pursuits which must, or at least ought to be, allowed sometimes to incroach even upon these enjoyments; and this consideration it was which urged her every morning to pay her respects to the rising sun,

to bestir herself with the lark, and to taste a fashionable day's pleasure before a fashionable day usually begins, thus gaining a day on every day, and doubling her span of life, and thus showing in her practice, and by her illustrious example, the indolence of half the world, who live but half the time which bounteous Heaven hath allotted to them.

Her ladyship arose, and descended to breakfast, when a letter lying on the breakfast table attracted her notice.— She opened it; it was an unknown hand; the name at the conclusion was “*Anonymous*.” She inquired whence it came; it was brought by a stranger, who disappeared after delivering it. A singular sensation pervaded the bosom of Lady Longbonnet. In her brother's manor she had never heard of the practice of writing mysterious and secret letters;

she had but once heard of the practice during her life, and that was in the case of the letter which had been put into the hands of Scarmouth, at the gaming-house, which circumstance had reached her ears, although the contents of that note were unknown. This had all the marks and appearances of one of those mysterious circumstances, and it was not until after some minutes had elapsed that she could collect fortitude enough to run her eye over its contents. A little reflection, however, recalled her ebbing courage; and, summoning her fortitude, she seated herself and read as follows:—

“MADAM,

“Keep not company with serpents, for serpents have stings, and are not to be trusted: they are ungrateful, and will wound while you caress them.—

Study characters before you commit your confidence to their keeping. Be not eager in your kindness, let your natural benignity be gradually shared out by merit as it develops itself. Although this letter comes from an unknown, from an unknown you may receive advice and profit by it. The castle of the lord of a manor may be a receptacle of reptiles ; beware, madam ! beware of the Ladies Jerry and Heartshallow : you have goodness of disposition, and this is a quality they hate ; and if they cannot eradicate it from the bosom with which they associate, they will endeavour to destroy the possessor. You have views in life which, however they may affect to conceal their sentiments, are incompatible with their interests and obnoxious to their inclinations. Your exaltation to the sphere in which you expect to be placed would be the certain

signal for their degradation. Are they blind to this consequence? No! Have they the interests of Narcissus and yourself so much at heart that they would submit to it? No! Will they suffer their malignity to decline into apathy and supineness? No, no, no! Then let your ladyship listen to the voice of a friend, who, though unknown, is not the less your friend, because he whispers invisibly: beware of the vipers you are inclined to cherish, or their poison will anon be insinuated into your felicity, and the very moment which may appear to you to be the consummation of your happiness, will, in fact, be the commencement of your destruction. I will not occupy your time longer. I pray, I implore you not to neglect the monitions of mysterious friendship.— You have time yet to counteract the mischief, which, suffered to grow, would

soon reach maturity, and which, once matured, you cannot overcome.

“ ANONYMOUS.”

Her ladyship dropped the letter, and for some moments sat suspended between doubt and apprehension. What could this communication import? These Fever-islanders are strange people, said she, internally; they must intermeddle with every thing. What harm can result to me from an acquaintance with these ladies? The question threw her into a deep reflection, which rendered her insensible to surrounding objects.

The Controller entered the apartment to breakfast, and started at the appearance of his sister; but seeing the open letter laying on the floor, he forbore to interrupt, but, picking up the communication, eagerly began to peruse it, and

had reached the end without interruption from his sister, when his expression, "This is a strange kind of caution!" broke her reverie, and roused her to observation.

"My brother!" said she, "you have read that singular epistle; pray tell me what is your opinion of its contents."

"'Tis written by no fool, and I hope by no foe," said he; "but what is its precise import I must read it again before I can discover. When did these ladies visit you?" said he, resuming, as he concluded the epistle a second time, and re-folding it, handed it to his sister.

"Yesterday," was her reply.

"Know you any thing of their characters?" asked the Controller.

"Nothing," said her ladyship.

The Controller paused a moment, and returned, "'Tis nothing but the officious intermeddling of some individual, who, perhaps, has received an appointment from one of these ladies, or owes them some pique; at any rate, it is not a circumstance worth our concern. Come, my sister, let us take our coffee, and think no more of a circumstance of such very trifling import. I am indeed ashamed of myself that I should have been entrapped into a momentary surprise by such a trifling occurrence, the obvious design of which is to make a breach between you and Narcissus."

"Do you think then, my brother," asked Lady Longbonnet, "that it is merely some trick of Germania or her friends, to prevent me from giving credit

to the singular anecdotes which, from the method of their commencement, I judged the ladies Heartshallow and Jerry were about to amuse me?"

"That is the most probable supposition, my dearest girl," returned the Controller, "for methinks I begin to see in the character of these tenants an evident disposition to be envious and mistrustful, and I am much out in my calculation, if their communication, which has given you such a sharp, but momentary pain, has originated in any thing more or less than a little private spite against the ladies who are the object of its malevolence. Take my advice, sister; throw the letter behind the fire, and think no more about it."

"Nay, brother," returned Lady Longbonnet, "I should be sorry to de-

stroy it yet. Let me first enquire of Narcissus respecting it. He may possess some means of tracing the note to its origin : for if it has originated in any evil to injure the ladies who have called on me, by exciting in my breast the suspicions respecting them, I should wish that the writer might not escape the punishment he so well deserves for his vile attempt to defame respectable characters. But if, on the contrary, there should be some foundation for the hints thrown out, it is but just that Narcissus should be informed of the reputation of these females as well as myself, since it must have been through his ignorance of them that he has been led to introduce them to me."

Some lurking suspicions probably possessed the Controller's mind at that moment, respecting Narcissus, which

induced him to resist this proposal on the part of his sister ; but whatever might have been his mistrusts, he kept them sacred within his own bosom, contenting himself with merely asserting that he saw no good effect which could result from the discovery of the letter to him ; “ for,” said the Controller, “ should he even detect the writer, he will not dare to pursue him to punishment, since the characters of these ladies have been so blown upon by the vassals, in consequence of the injury the one has done to Germania, and of the influence which the other has recently exercised over Narcissus, that what could be intended as a punishment, might only become a day of triumph to the delinquent, and might draw more popular odium, and a greater share of popular vengeance on the females themselves, who have been traduced in this letter. The

Fever-islanders, you must have seen, sister, are not a people who will judge or act by halves; what thing they take into their heads to perform is usually performed, and that in a summary and decisive way; and who can tell at what point they might think proper to restrain their feelings of indignation, should these feelings be once put in full motion by any unwise measure of the moment."

Lady Longbonnet was convinced by the reasoning of her brother, at least of the impropriety of showing the letter to Narcissus for the present; but she could not bring herself to consent to its destruction. A secret sentiment pervaded her mind that there must be some grounds for its dictation which she was not enabled to discover, but which time alone could have the power to unravel: she read the note again, and fancied

that at every perusal there appeared to be some new feature which demanded more particular caution on her part. What motive could the writer have in adopting such forcible language as that which he had chosen? While she was reflecting upon the question, her brother also found it impossible to rid his mind of the subject so soon as he had imagined. He wished to persuade himself that it was merely an attempt of some busy meddler, instigated by envy or malice, yet the more he perused the style and the manner of the note, the more he felt persuaded that they were not those of common, vulgar officiousness, but that there was some motive for the address, which he was not yet able to discover. The more he endeavoured to find out this hidden motive, however, the more he was perplexed; therefore, making a bold effort once more to ba-

nish the theme, he took suddenly hold of his sister's hand, disturbed the seriousness of her thoughts, and leading her to the breakfast-table, exclaimed, "Come, my dear sister, let us think no more of this nonsense ; fill me a cup of coffee, and tell me how you mean to dispose of yourself to-day, and whether you have any particular friends of your party, if you have any object in view, whose presence will exclude mine."

"No, my dear brother," returned her ladyship, "I had engaged myself with those plaguy ladies, who have caused me all this trouble, to go with them to see some curiosities, which they took a great deal of trouble to describe to me, and they are to call and take me in their way, by eleven o'clock ; but if their society should rob me of your's, my dear brother, I will go with you, and leave our apology for them."

“By no means, my sister,” returned the Controller, “I shall pray to be admitted of your party, which I have no doubt will be a very delightful one, and as I have a strong desire to see this collection, I shall be most happy to embrace so agreeable an opportunity.”

The arrangement was accordingly thus made; and the breakfast was scarcely finished, before the ladies Heartshallow and Jerry made their appearance, according to appointment, and in a few minutes, the whole groupe ascended an open carriage of Lady Longbonnet's, and drove away for the museum.

END OF VOL. II.

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A
MONTH IN TOWN;

A Satirical Novel.

BY
HUMPHREY HEDGEHOG, Esq.

AUTHOR OF
"THE GENERAL-POST BAG," "REJECTED ODES,"
&c. &c. &c.

"VELUTI IN SPECULUM."

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOLUME III.

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WITH NEW PREFACE, &c.

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A

MONTH IN TOWN.

CHAPTER XX.

Lady Puggilla's ill humour after her Interview with Lady Charlotte—She vents it on Narcissus, who pacifies her—Letter from Lady Charlotte, and the powerful Consequences which resulted from it.

AWAY posted Puggilla to the castle of Narcissus, vehement with fury, and burning to discharge her choler on some person or other. The poor postilion was the first who felt the effects of her ladyship's anger. Now he drove too slow ;

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B

now the rascal had no mercy upon the poor beasts, but flogged them as though he was venting his strength upon a post or a stone ; and this was not because her ladyship had any mixture of benevolence in her composition, which urged her to advocate the cause of the quadrupeds, but merely from a desire to give ease to the impetuosity of her feelings, which convulsed her whole system with the most violent emotions. The coachman now accelerated, now moderated the speed of his horses ; this moment shortened the reins, and next applied to the lash, until, his patience worn down to the very stumps, he threw himself back upon his seat, and inwardly swore a most tremendous oath, that the devil might fetch the carriage and horses too, and might drive her ladyship into the bargain, before he would consent to undergo such another d—d journey ; all

though, truth to tell, the very utmost extent of the way, measured by one of the most accurate three-foot rules, did not exceed one hundred and forty-four yards and three quarters.

The footman, who handed her ladyship's train out of the carriage, next received a due portion of reproof, since, unfortunately, in his over eagerness to show attention to his lady, he closed a part of her dress within the door of the vehicle, and had nearly overturned his mistress into the street. The poor devil thought himself more than happy to escape from his perilous situation with only a slight contusion on the ear, and contented himself, under his mortification, with joining with the coachman in a few hearty imprecations, as soon as her ladyship was safely lodged within the gates of the castle.

“ I’ll tell you what, my dear son,” said she, flouncing into the room where Narcissus was sitting, without ceremony—“ if you can’t teach your termagant daughter to conduct herself respectfully towards her grandmother, you had better turn her over to my tuition, and I’ll teach the hussey how to behave herself. Why, I am absolutely choking with passion when I think of the brazen impudence with which she conducted herself. If she had been a child of mine, may I never more get a pinch of good snuff, if I would not have flogged the jade for an hour or two before I would have suffered such vile treatment.” And as she concluded, with an eye to effect, her ladyship threw herself violently upon a sofa, and most emphatically burst into a flood of tears.

Narcissus knew all this was intended

to work upon his passions ; assuming, therefore, an air of the deepest concern, in order that his mother might not be disappointed, he took her hand in a most filial-like manner, and intreated her to compose her feelings. “ Do not, my dear mother,” said he,—“ I pray you do not suffer the impertinence of that gipsey to discompose you. Leave her to me for another week, while I inflict a severe punishment for this breach of duty and affection to your ladyship ; and, after that time, I will most willingly surrender her to your management, and I sincerely hope you will neither be sparing of your precepts, nor your correction ; for I assure you, she stands as much in need of the latter as she does of the former. She and her mother have plagued me to death, but I sincerely hope I shall soon rid myself of both the incorrigible creatures. But

what said she, my dear mother, to your kind condescension in troubling yourself as you have done about the promotion of her interests? I hope she was not deficient in the expression of her thanks."

"Thanks, indeed!" quoth Puggilla; "all the thanks she gave me, consisted of as complete an attack upon my whole behaviour towards her, as one plebeian ever received from the abusive tongue of another. No sooner did she hear of my business with her, than she threw off all kind of decorum, and poured upon me such a series of abusive epithets, that my patience could not stand it, I assure you, my dear Narcissus."

"And what method did your ladyship adopt to bring her to reason?" asked

Narcissus, in a tone of much assumed surprise and concern.

“ I reasoned with the girl with all the mildness imaginable,” returned Pug-gilla ;—“ remonstrated with her on the impropriety of her conduct, painted to her the affection which her father felt towards her, and dwelt much upon the anguish which her flighty conduct had planted in your breast.”

“ Really, my dear mother, you are too good !” interrupted Narcissus ; “ and what said your ladyship to her on the subject of her mother ?”

“ Oh ! I did not omit, my son, to shew how ill Germania had behaved to you, and how good and generous it was of you to refrain from exposing her to that punishment which is so justly her

deserts ; and I told her that reason and religion, when they instructed us to honour our parents, only intended to allude to those parents who conducted themselves with propriety in the world, as you well know I have done !” And here the old lady paused to give Narcissus an opportunity of paying her a compliment upon her maternal qualifications ; but Narcissus most unfortunately had left his bed before eleven o’clock that morning, and, in spite of his utmost efforts, he was actually napping when his mother turned round in expectation of a compliment.

Her ladyship was thunderstruck at the listlessness which marked the countenance of her son. “ Heavens !” said she, “ does the father as well as the daughter endeavour to convince me how little he cares about me ! There was a time, when

my poor husband (God send him relief from his troubles!) was in good health, and had the management of affairs, that Narcissus would not have ventured to behave so disrespectfully to his mother. But I won't be made the laughing-stock of the one and the fool of the other; I'll go home, and they shall send to me before I come to see any of them any more!"

And so saying, her ladyship prepared to take her departure, but having raised her voice rather too high, while muttering her complaints, it disturbed the broken slumbers of Narcissus, who, stretching his arms, and *yawning* most *gracefully*, exclaimed, "What's the matter, mother, eh?" Then recovering himself a little more, he resumed—"A thousand pardons, my dear madam, for this seeming negligence and inattention

to your conversation ; but really these visitors of mine seem to think it unnecessary for a man to lie in bed twelve hours round. By Heaven, they must be stirring before the sun, or else they cry out shame upon themselves for what they call their indolence. Why, would you believe it, mother, for these ten mornings past, I have never yet been able to get one wink of sleep after half-past nine o'clock ? 'Tis quite a bore, I do assure you, to be lugged out of bed every day in this manner, and I must not, nor will not, submit to such a regulation in future." And then the deputy lord rubbed his eyes, yawned, rose from his seat, and shook himself, and then asked what his mother had been saying when he dropped off.

Puggilla was restored to pretty good humour by this apology—" True," said

she, "it is unusual for you to rise before noon, except on matters of great emergency, and then, as my old man used to say, though it was quite a vulgar phrase—"business must be attended to;" and in consideration of this hardship upon you, I will, for once, overlook your sleeping in my presence, although I must say it was vastly indecorous and unlike your usual manners."

And then her ladyship went on to repeat all that had passed between herself and Lady Charlotte, and as her ladyship was by no means a very close stickler to facts, what with the aid of her inventive faculties and her exaggerations of what did actually occur, she certainly shaped out a tale which conveyed the most severe accusation against Lady Charlotte, whom she painted as black and as hideous as the description of Sin

in *Paradise Lost*, with a view to make the stronger and more durable impression upon the filial feelings of her son ; and when she concluded the tale, by way of comment, her ladyship exclaimed—"Now, my dear Narcissus, you must absolutely let her be with me ; or else I see very clearly that nothing good will ever come from her. Send her for a few months to breathe the air of Aïrsor, and give me authority over her conduct, and you shall soon see what an altered being I will make of the young child of Xantippe."

"Xantippe !" reiterated Narcissus ;
"why, my dear madam, Xantippe was a sweet-tempered, mild, angelic, creature, compared to Germania and this daughter of mine. I am indebted to you for your kind offer, and will avail myself of it, be assured, very speedily ; and

as to authority over her, I beseech you, my dear mother, to allow her neither to see nor to correspond with any earthly beings except her own establishment, without your express concurrence."

This delegation of the trust she wanted put Puggilla into good humour, for she was anxious to revenge herself upon Lady Charlotte for the manner in which she had behaved to her that day. She vowed inwardly that she would lock her up, and feed her upon nothing better than bread and water, until she had contrived to bring down that proud spirit which actuated her on all occasions.— She would forbid her the use of pen, ink, and paper, and bribe all her attendants, so that neither her mother nor any of the vassals should receive the least information respecting her treatment; and, after she had once thoroughly and com-

pletely subdued all the vixen in her disposition and temper, her ladyship most humanely resolved to give her a little personal liberty to take an airing in the parks, or to visit some neighbouring promenade, where, if the young lady chose to hazard the attempt, she would never be able to make her escape, in consequence of the number of spies who should hang upon her path.

Her ladyship worked herself up to such a pitch of ardour on the subject, that she resolved to commence operations immediately, and would have taken the Lady Charlotte with her instantly, but that Narcissus advised, as a measure of prudence, that matters should rest as they were for a short time, to give opportunity for the tenantry to lose the suspicions and jealousies which agitated them ; for the reader must know, that,

during the conference between Puggilla and Lady Charlotte, the dispute grew so loud, that it attracted an immense concourse of vassals round the outer gate, who, seeing the carriage of Puggilla, were certain that some *oratorical sparring* was going forward. This crowd had increased to such a degree, that when Puggilla entered her carriage to depart she was scarcely enabled to force her way through the surrounding mob, which did not fail to salute her ladyship with a number of disrespectful epithets, and no inconsiderable degree of hissing and hooting, their customary weapons of assault. Puggilla, however, had been so frequently accustomed to this noise that it did not appear to make any sensible impression upon her feelings. It was to this circumstance that Narcissus alluded when he spoke of the suspicions and jealousies of the tenantry, which he

well knew must have been excited on this occasion, and he knew them enough to feel aware that, on this delicate ground, he must proceed very warily, if he wished to preserve any relic of the wreck of his popularity. When Pug-gilla, therefore, proposed the instant removal of Lady Charlotte, he saw that his acquiescence in such a proposal might lead him into serious difficulties; and he had been in difficulties enough lately, and wished to avoid a multiplication of them, as far as he could do so without imposing too severe a tax upon his own inclinations. When her ladyship, therefore, proposed taking Lady Charlotte in her carriage, Narcissus replied, "My dear mother, every thing cannot be carried into effect in a moment. We must allow time for public curiosity, which you have roused to-day, to subside a little before we think of re-

moving the girl, or else, by the Lord! the mob will follow your carriage to Air-sor."

Puggilla was about to reply, when Mahony entered with a note which had just been delivered from Lady Charlotte by one of her attendants, and which was addressed to Narcissus, who as he opened it, exclaimed, "I wonder what the devil the young minx has got to say to me now! Let us see." Puggilla drew her chair close to that of her son, and, resting her elbows on both her knees, and supporting her chin with her thumbs, she ejaculated, "Aye, aye, let us hear!" Narcissus glanced hastily over a few lines in silence, and then, in rather an impetuous tone of voice, read aloud as follows:—

"DAER FATHER,

"I don't know whether or not you

sent the old lady here to school me to-day, and to force me to marry Orange-graft ; but if you did, it is all labour lost, I do assure you ; for every insult I receive only makes me the more determined in the opinion I have formed never to unite myself unto such a ———, but I won't abuse him ; nor I won't say a word against the Lady Puggilla, although if any body else had come here and treated me as her ladyship did, man or woman, he or she should certainly have gone through the ceremony of the horse-whip ! I know, my dear Father, that I am *somebody* in the manor, and that the tenantry think me *somebody*, and that you and my grandmother think me *somebody*, although you will take care not to confess it ; and why then am I treated as though I was *nobody* ? I have a very great mind, if that Lady Puggilla comes here again, to have

my doors shut against her, for I wish to see nobody that hates my mother, and I know her ladyship does, and therefore she cannot expect me to be very civil to her. Besides this, her ladyship, forsooth, must creep to my desk and writing-stand, if she is left in the room for a minute, and will get prying into all my secrets, and turning over all my letters, and I never will allow of this, if I know it. Therefore, my dear father, the meaning of this is to tell you that you need not send Lady Puggilla here again upon any such a business ; for if I ever liked Orange-graft, and was inclined to marry him, the very circumstance of Lady Puggilla having been sent to dragoon me into it, would incline me to alter all my opinions and to refuse him again. So when you want me to behave as you would wish, pray, father, convey your desires to me through any other messenger, and very

likely, if they are on indifferent subjects, and not at all out of the way, I might be inclined to accommodate you, and shew that sometimes I can act, as well as subscribe myself, your dutiful daughter,

“ C.”

“ Well !” cried Lady Puggilla, choking with rage and mortification, “ well ! and pray, my lord, what do you mean to say to the hussey, in answer to all this combination of impudence and invective ? The jade, to speak in such disrespectful terms of me ! Oh ! I shall most certainly expire with agitation ! I never endured so much agony before ! A person of my years, and my rank, and my appearance, to be subjected to such treatment, and from such a little good-for-nothing chit as that ! Why don’t you speak, Narcissus ? What do you mean to say to her ? I want to know.”

“Say to her, mother!” replied Narcissus—“I don’t know what the devil I can say to her. I believe she wants to torment me to death, that she may have the manor.”

“And she should not have the manor, for her impudence!” cried Puggilla—“and if you don’t go to her, now this moment, and give her as good a flogging as I ever gave my termagant Bess, never will I come into your house again as long as I live, and of that I am fully determined, and so you may think as you please about it, and act as you please. An impudent girl, to call me to account! To abuse a person of my rank and years and appearance!”

And then her ladyship stamped up and down the room like a maniac, while Narcissus followed her, endeavouring ever

and aonn to take her by the hand, but the old lady would not be pacified, but flirted about in such a fury, and did so bespatter him with her snuff, that after sneezing most violently for nearly ten minutes, he determined to give up the attempt, and returning to the sofa, threw himself upon it, and fell into a train of musing.

Lady Puggilla, however, would not allow him to rest even for a moment ; but finding he had left her to herself, she followed him to the couch, and began, " I say, Narcissus, do you choose to see your peer old mother abused in this vile abominable manner, and won't you go directly and give that girl a complete set-down ? Well, then, I'll go myself, for my fingers itch to give it her, and I'll teach her to speak in such disrespectful terms of me, I will ; and as for you, I never will enter your gates again, depend upon it, for I don't

choose to endure such treatment as this, I do assure you !”

“ Comfort yourself, mother,” returned Narcissus—“ I will go and correct the impudent girl, depend upon it !” Puggilla consented to become good humoured on hearing this, and Narcissus, ordering his carriage, drove to Lady Charlotte’s, leaving Lady Puggilla anxiously waiting the issue.

CHAPTER XXI.

Lady Puggilla's disappointment—Promise of Narcissus, who determines to send a Substitute to Lady Charlotte—Meeting of Advisers on important Business—Nature and Determination of their Discussions.

NARCISSUS found Lady Charlotte had been gone from home some minutes before he reached her house, and, as he could obtain no clue to trace her steps, he was compelled to return home without any satisfactory account of his journey to Lady Puggilla, whose anger, not having time to abate, was instantly

roused by the return of her son without having executed the mission on which he set out. Agitated as she was, however, by conflicting passions, she contrived to keep them in tolerable restraint, and to ask Narcissus, with much composure, when he intended to renew the call upon his perverse and undutiful girl?

“To-morrow morning,” said Narcissus: “this evening I have devoted to receiving the visits of some of my principal friends for the purpose of discussing some most important business; and, in truth, it is now the hour fixed for their assembly, and they are usually punctual.”

Lady Puggilla consented with a very ill grace to postpone till the morrow the gratification of hearing of the punish-

ment which Narcissus might inflict upon Lady Charlotte, and after cautioning her son not to let the pleasures of the table banish from his memory the injury which his mother had received, she very reluctantly ordered her carriage and took her way to Ainsor Castle, leaving Narcissus not a little pleased at the termination of a visit, which from its commencement promised nothing but disappointment and dissatisfaction, and which had imposed upon him a task which he felt very little disposed to execute; and indeed which after a little deliberation, he resolved to transfer to Eildown, who had once before gone to Lady Charlotte on a similar errand.

In a few moments after the departure of Lady Puggilla, came Eildown, Blenkinson, and Calderagh, the three favourite tenants of Narcissus, who had

appointed to dine with him, and to report to him what had been done respecting his final separation from Germania. They were at all times welcome visitors, for they never flinched from the bottle, but always accounted it of more consequence than the interest of the manor: for the consideration of which they always professed to assemble together, although it was well known that the principal persons who benefited by their frequent meetings, were the wine merchants who supplied the castle, and who, lately, had been put upon the *pay* establishment.

“ Well,” said Narcissus, the cloth being removed, (for let business be never so important, custom had prohibited the introduction of such a subject until the wine was on the table, probably because wine inspires the faculties, mental and bodily, and consequently enables

men to discuss interesting topics with much more keenness and precision than at any other time,) "well," said Narcissus, "what have you done, my boys?"

"We have pioneered the way, my lord," said Eildown, who always claimed precedence in speech, "and have every prospect of doing your lordship's business, if you will allow us time, but it must take a few years before we can venture to enter on it with a certainty of success."

"A few years!" exclaimed Narcissus, rising from the table in a fury, and hurling his glass across the room; the action seemed to assuage the storm which menaced the company, and seating himself again very coolly, he resumed in a moderated tone, "zounds and the devil! must I wait a few years before I can

obtain the single wish of my heart? Go, go, I'll have some better advisers,—some who will pay more attention to my wishes."

"That, my lord," returned Calderagh, "with all due deference, is impossible. We will try the question, now, if you please; but remember, my lord, how strong the current of popular opinion runs against us on this subject. Our only object in proposing delay, is to make the issue certain, to place it beyond even the possibility of failure. We have sounded the principal tenants, and they are to be had, but not until the public feeling may have subsided. 'Tis a strong tide, my lord, and we cannot stem it; therefore, it is better to appear to swim with it till the opportunity to resist it shall appear favourable."

“D—n me, there’s some reason in it,” replied Narcissus, filling a bumper; “then I’ll tell you what, my boys, I will give you two years from this very day to complete the business; if it is done in that time, you keep your places, while I keep mine; if you fail, why then—*you shall budge!*”

“I accept the terms,” cried Blenkinson; “And I!” “And I!” cried Eildown and Calderagh in a breath, with gratitude beaming from their eyes.

“Then now, my boys,” cried Narcissus, “what is to be done with this daughter of mine? And how must I manage with my dear Lady Longbonnet?” And then Narcissus began to recapitulate all which had passed between Lady Charlotte and Lady Puggilla, and also all which had passed between Lady

Puggilla and himself, concluding with the promise he had given to go and call his daughter to a severe account for her glaring misconduct on this occasion."

"Egad, my lord," returned Eildown; "you have undertaken a difficult job. I should not like to stand in your shoes. I have tried the experiment once."

"And you will try it again," interrupted Narcissus; "for I design you the honour of representing me on this occasion, I assure you!"

"Ha! ha! ha!" involuntarily burst from the rest of the company, who enjoyed beyond measure the confusion and mortification which shone conspicuous in the countenance of Eildown; but he was too good a judge of his own interest to carry his feelings to too great a length.

He therefore joined in the "He ! he ! he !" against himself, and most complaisantly replied, "My Lord, I am at all times ready to sacrifice my own inclinations to your's ; were I not so, I should be the most ungrateful of men. I shall faithfully attend to all your lordship's instructions in this most delicate affair."

"Well said, my hearty old cock," cried Narcissus, his eyes sparkling with pleasure ; "then, d—n me, do any thing but hit her, and that you know would not be perfectly correct to do at her age, setting aside all considerations of her rank and situation in the manor. You have my full authority to scold her for three hours in the severest language you can find, and should she grow outrageously obdurate, you may venture to give her a bit of a shaking."

"Not for worlds, my lord," exclaim-

ed Eildown. "Egad, my wig would be sent out at the window in three minutes, if I were to get too close to her violent ladyship. As far as words will do, my lord, I have no objection to resort to a few strong ones, but further argument I deprecate. A fool once should not be a fool for ever!"

"As you like, only bring me a tolerable account for Lady Puggilla in the morning," replied Narcissus. "But now, what can we do with her afterwards? I have hit upon a plan in my mind which goes to compel her to have Orangegrass, whether she would or not. I have studiously endeavoured to make her think that she has no kind of right to choose a husband for herself, but must take such an one as I shall recommend; and I now wish to reap the benefit of my instructions to her."

"Truly, my lord," answered Blenkinson, "I would bring the matter to that issue by compulsion, if I could not by any other means accomplish it. I have no idea of too great nicety in these matters. And as to Orangecraft, I should suppose he would be the last man to throw impediments in the way of your purpose!"

"Oh, the fool!" exclaimed Narcissus; "I have got my bit in his mouth, and can govern him and turn him which way I please. There is no fear of his indisposition to the thing in the least. I have but to speak the word, and she is out of the manor in a few hours. Then, you all agree to—that is, advise me to adopt some new measure of salutary force to impel her in the way which leads to her best interests? Do I so understand you, my boys?"

“Aye, aye, my lord,” returned Calderagh, “we will take all the responsibility of your actions upon our own shoulders, if that is what you are driving at. Away with her ; let that happy dog have her if he pleases, and I wish he may be able to curb her impetuous spirit ; but, by the Lord, I much doubt it.”

“That will be his business,” said Narcissus. “All I want is to get her out of the way of her mother, for I am determined, by hook or by crook, to cut that connection asunder ; it has already caused me pain and anxiety enough, and I mean to have no more on that subject. But you know my affection for Lady Longbonnet ; my intention it was to have carried my divorce, and to have obtained her previous to the time fixed for her departure from my manor, and of this she is aware : how then can I

“speak to her of procrastination? Your delays have brought me into this unpleasant difficulty.”

“In my opinion, my lord,” said Blenkinson, “you had better lay our opinions before her, and obtain her assurance to return again when your object is obtained; or if you, my lord, can hit upon a preferable mode, your’s shall be the benefit and our’s the sole responsibility.”

The others agreed in this sentiment; and the glass now began to circulate pretty freely, in so much that each tongue instead of dwelling upon the theme of public business, was freighted only with tales of amorous adventures. “I had a singular one,” said Calderagh, “some time ago, when H—— and I went *incog.* to obtain the votes of the tenants

for the election of ——— to a seat in the council. We went into a neat-looking small house, in search of a tenant whom he wanted ; the object of our quest was dead, but he had left a widow and a daughter ; the former of whom was laid on the bed of sickness, while the latter, with the utmost filial piety, was employed in the tender office of cheering and cherishing the invalid. She was a pretty girl, and while the old lady kept H—— in conversation by her bed-side, for we were admitted without hesitation, I, under some pretext, drew the young female into the next apartment, and promised to give her a hundred pounds to enable her mother and herself to be comfortable. She eagerly caught my hand and kissed it ; I took advantage of the moment when gratitude had withdrawn from her the shield of reason, and insinuated the lessons of love

with so much art, that the simpleton believed me, and eloped to a lodging which I provided for her for the night."

"Bravo ! Bravo !" cried Narcissus—
"By the Lord, thou wert in luck, and hadst, no doubt, ample value for thy hundred pounds !"

"In truth, my Lord," returned Calde-
ragh, "my father had told me that *pay before hand* is a bad system, and therefore I did not act upon it ; but in avoiding this error, I accidentally fell into a worse ; for, in my hurry and agitation I really went away, and never paid at all. It was perfectly unintentional, and though I have repeatedly endeavoured to recal the street to my memory, I have never been able to find it since."

"Fie on't ! fie on't," said Narcissus ;

“I do not approve of this system of licentiousness. For my part, I am at least more honourable in the measures I adopt. I act also with peculiar delicacy in all my advances towards the fair sex; and, by this alliance with honour and delicacy, I contrive to go through all my undertakings with a certain degree of *éclat* under every circumstance.”

“Sir,” replied Calderagh, “your situation and influence in the manor are sure guarantees of *éclat* to whatever actions you may think proper to commit. But it is not so with us, who are simply your vassals; we are called to strict account for every thing we do; and even that part of our conduct which is most dazzling and praise-worthy, by the severe scrutiny which it is compelled to undergo, becomes so patched and so

meagre in its appearance, that after it comes out of the furnace, in good truth it scarcely appears to have a valuable particle left about it."

"Very correct, indeed," added Blenkinson; "and when, by accident, we fall into any errors of conduct, by Heaven, our failings are so aggravated, our motives so traduced, and our views so misrepresented, that the very frailty which is passed over in others appears in us as a vice of the blackest magnitude."

"Well, well," interrupted Narcissus; "a truce with your complaining and your nonsense; you are all better off than you merit. But come, Eildown, let us have thy story, which I anticipate will be a good one."

Eildown, thus called upon, was too obedient a servant to hesitate; being, however, a tenant who was accustomed to deliberate over every word, he spoke a prodigious length of time: he commenced very slowly, and with a long string of "humphs" and "ha's," which kept his auditors in a continued roar of laughter for some minutes. At length, however, after prefacing that his hatred to a falsehood exceeded even the dislike he felt to his own exposure, he went through a narrative of an event, in which he was the principal *buffo*; but the glaring indelicacy of which prevents us from giving it in detail, lest, gentle reader, the Suppressors of Vice should lay their talons on us and our story.

Poor Eildown had been interrupted

about a dozen times by the boisterous and ill-timed mirth which was occasioned by his unaffected detail of the circumstances of his frailty; but no sooner had he reached the conclusion than he joined in the laugh, being, in truth, one of the most even-tempered men living, and who had just as soon join in a laugh against himself as against any body else; and besides, he was too much attached to his own interest, to take offence even at any sneers aimed at himself, when he perceived either that Narcissus was the marksman, or joined in the sport.

“By the lord, Eildown,” said Narcissus, “I’ll have thee hanged for conspiring against my life, for such immoderate laughing would soon bring me to a premature grave. Egad! I have not

laughed so for these twenty years, I'll be sworn. In truth thou art a merry well-conceited fellow, and art the very soul and buffoon of the company. Methinks thou wert intended by nature for an ape rather than a man, if thy tale be correct !”

Eildown bowed very low to Narcissus, as much as to say, “ Even to be called an ape by the deputy-lord is highly complimentary to my character !”

“ Well, Blenkinson,” resumed Narcissus, “ and how hast thou employed thyself? To a better purpose, I trust, than Eildown, or I shall not have so high an opinion of thy prowess as I have been accustomed to have. Let us have more wine, to accompany this new narrative. Go on, boy !”

Blenkinson began.—“In truth, sir, I should be sorry to cut such a figure as my friend and companion Eildown has done before me. I am not much adapted for these kind of exploits; my disposition points to more steady objects. You all know that my grandfather was secretary to a great man; from which he never advanced to any thing of a superior description. But for a fortunate incident I also might have been doomed to a similar low line of life. Chance, however, had ordained otherwise; and one day I was standing near a house of ill fame, when I witnessed an illustrious vassal of this manor, who had promised me his protection, enter into this abode of licentiousness. He had not been there many minutes before I heard a terrible outcry within, followed by a screaming of “murder,” pronounced in a most pitiful voice, which I knew to be

my patron's. There was no time to seek for assistance; a moment's delay might prove fatal. I summoned up courage, recollecting that a little energy on this occasion might be the making of me, rushed boldly into the house, the door being half open, and knocking at an apartment whence the noise proceeded, I saw my friend under two ruffians, who were rifling his pockets with the loudest menaces. I instantly called my protector by his name, and exclaimed that his servants were all at the door of the house whither we had traced him. The villains flew in terror; I assisted my patron to rise, told him my scheme, assisted him to escape, and was immediately raised to dignity. This is all I have ever had to do with an exploit of this description."

Blenkinson received great applause

for his ingenuity; and the whole party, after getting *gloriously* drunk, sallied forth in search of new adventures.

CHAPTER XXII.

Eildown proceedeth to Lady Charlotte—Bull-dog—The Interview—Unexpected Interruption—Eildown's Mortification—His Escape and Return—Consultation with Narcissus, and Decision.

ON the following morning Eildown proceeded to execute the commission with which he had been charged by Narcissus. The anticipation of this tremendous business had so agitated him during the whole of the night, that, "many a time and oft" did his astonished wife endeavour, by every means in her power, to draw from him the secret of his unea-

siness; and at length after much exertion, in one of those moments and by one of those modes in and by which women always prevail, she succeeded, and learned the whole of the important business. All the comfort she could impart, however, availed but little to compose her sleepless and uncomfortable husband: he dreaded some violence from the wild and ungovernable spirit of Lady Charlotte, and to this neither his rank nor his native pride would allow him quietly to submit, yet which the law of the manor would not allow him to retaliate. There was no alternative; he must either fulfil the pleasure of Narcissus, or must give up what was dearer to him than life itself—the sweets of his situation. This latter idea reconciled him more than any other consideration to the task he was about to undertake. Let come what would, he knew his fide-

lity to Narcissus would gain him his public esteem and countenance, backed by which he should maintain his situation in the manor, and command universal respect and approbation.

Notwithstanding he thus fortified himself by every reflection he could command, when he set out upon his expedition he looked more like a malefactor going to execution than the head of the tenants of the manor of Fever-isle. Several times he faltered and wavered in the street, as undetermined whether he himself should proceed boldly to oppose the whole fury of the storm which might ensue, or whether, copying his noble master's example, he should look round him for some substitute to take the disagreeable task out of his hands. Self-interest opposed this sentiment, as Narcissus might hear of the circumstance ;

and, if so, the cheat would be fatal to the character he wished to support with Narcissus, and might, perchance, lead to his ultimate downfall. He therefore summoned all the intrepidity he could command, and pushed forward with the utmost speed, with a view to dispatch the matter as quickly as possible.

In the mean time, Lady Charlotte had been occupied during the morning by the conversation of Bull-dog, who, hearing that she had received but indifferent treatment, gallantly resolved to wait upon her ladyship, and to make her an offer of his assistance, if, at any time, she should be so situated as to require it. In the natural candour and simplicity of her heart, Lady Charlotte immediately told the veteran every thing which had befallen her since she had been persecuted by the addresses of Orangegrass, and

every now and then he would start up, clap his hand to his sword, and vow that the recital filled his old worn-out veins with all the strength and fire and energy of youth. Lady Charlotte thanked him most sincerely for the interest he expressed in her welfare, and was on the point of asking his advice how she should act under her present circumstances of peril and difficulty, with her own happiness, on one side, at stake, and all her filial affection; and, on the other, the affection of her father and his future good opinion, when Eildown's name was announced, and Lady Charlotte shrunk within herself at the anticipation of some circumstances hostile to her peace.

Bull-dog saw her agitation, as he was offering to take leave, and immediately hesitated to take his departure, and Lady Charlotte seeing him undetermined,

intreated him not to leave her, but to retire into a dressing room adjoining, that he might be within call if she should feel occasion for him ; to which Bulldog immediately assented, and, retiring, determined that whoever should venture to offer her any insult should feel the weight of his arm, and learn from him an impressive lesson of gallantry.

He had scarcely taken his position in the dressing-room, before Eildown entered the room where Lady Charlotte was sitting, and, without much ceremony of manner, or without ever venturing to look into her face, the shrinking messenger began to detail the sorrow and surprise which Narcissus had felt upon hearing from his mother of the ungracious and rude reception she had met with during her recent visit, for which it was his lordship's desire that she

should make an immediate and full apology, as some recompence to the wounded feelings of her illustrious grandmother. And as Eildown concluded, he took out his handkerchief, and began to blow his nose most furiously, hoping, no doubt, to out-thunder the scolding which he anticipated from the anger of Lady Charlotte.

He had replaced his handkerchief in his pocket, however, before she made any reply, and that silence increased his terrors, winding them up to the highest pitch. At length Lady Charlotte coughed, blew her nose, and in the coolest tone imaginable, exclaimed,—“ Well, and is this the end of your communication ? ”

“ Yes, my lady,” returned Eildown—
“ that is all—I believe. Yes—quite

all.—Only, if I knew any mode of impressing more strongly upon your mind penitence for your very ill conduct towards Lady Puggilla, I should think it most certainly my duty to adopt it in conveying my message to your ladyship, since your own sense of right and wrong must sufficiently convince you that you have been guilty of a very great and audacious breach of good-manners.”

“Humph!” ejaculated Lady Charlotte. Eildown did not recover himself for some moments, but, finding that nothing followed, he at length proceeded.

“I say, my lady, you ought not to have given loose, as you have done, to the violence of your ungovernable temper; since every law, human and divine, teaches us duty and affection to our superiors and elders, and more especially,

to those who are united to us in bonds of consanguinity. And, my lady, if a daughter of mine had behaved to her grandmother as you have behaved to your's, egad, I should have considered myself justified in giving her a little manual chastisement."

"You would indeed, my good friend?" interrupted Lady Charlotte, in a sneering tone of voice—"then now let me speak a word in your ear!" Eildown drew back, startled at the import of her words, and mechanically lifted up both his hands to his wig, and ran back a few paces, with the most unequivocal symptoms of fear and amazement pictured in every feature, and a deathly paleness mantling in his cheeks.

Lady Charlotte resumed---"Come hither, friend. Dost know me? Dost recollect whom I am? Am I not the

heiress of this manor? And art thou not one of those servile instruments of power, who will one day perhaps approach me, on bended knee, to supplicate a grace, and to win the smile of my protection? Go---go, man; thou art proud, ignorant, hollow-hearted, and shallow-headed! Thou hast foolishly imagined thou wert talking to one of thine own rank. Get out of my house, fellow, and tell thy master, from me, that he must send a wiser messenger, before he can teach me any lessons of penitence and behaviour."

These little taunts, strange to say, roused the limited portion of spirit which was blended in Eildown's composition, and, assuming a courage which he had seldom before possessed, he advanced a few paces towards Lady Charlotte, and replied, "Madam, your lady-

ship's high spirit must and shall be humbled. Do you imagine that your insolent taunts have power to intimidate me? You require correction, and you will ere long receive a due portion. In fact, I am now empowered to——."

Lady Charlotte shrieked, exclaiming, "Wretch, do you dare to menace?" and at the same instant the door flew open, and Bull-dog rushed vehemently upon Eildown, who had assumed a violent attitude to give more effect to his menaces, and seizing him by the collar vociferated, as he shook the trembling Mercury, "Scoundrel! is this your treatment of your master's daughter? Were it not respect for the presence of her whom you have insulted which restrains my hand, I would strike you, mean ——, into the earth. As it is, however, thank Lady Charlotte that you

have escaped with a whole skin, and that your punishment is limited to being kicked out into the street. Come, master Mercury, take your leave, and let me escort you to the door, that I may show you the speediest mode of making an exit."

The trembling Eildown's courage entirely evaporated, as soon as he saw Bull-dog, and, in the first moment of fear, he would willingly have given even his situation to have been fairly out of the premises. "What a fool am I!" muttered he to himself, while his fierce antagonist stood shaking him. "What a d—d fool am I to suffer myself to be compelled to undertake such a cursed business! Why the devil was not Blenkinson or Calderagh employed in the business? Why is poor Pill Garlick always selected to go upon every forlorn expedition, wherever there is dan-

ger and disgrace to be met, but not an atom of fame to be obtained?" And then the bare idea of the danger he had escaped, and the prospect of the kicking which Bull-dog had promised, and which he had not the least doubt he should receive, made such a powerful impression upon his feelings, that he could scarcely support his own weight, but was glad to borrow a little strength from the doorpost near which he stood. After Bull-dog had desired him to be gone, however, he made a feeble movement to obey the order, and, turning himself round, was about to sneak out of the room, when his violent adversary, giving him a sudden jerk round, desired him first to take his leave in a becoming manner, and to beg pardon for the intolerable rudeness he had been guilty of towards his young mistress. "Come,"

said Bull-dog, "no hesitation! Down on your marrow-bones, fellow!"

Eildown remonstrated with all his power against this required indignity. "Remember my rank and situation," said he, "and pray let me be gone without acting a part which, were it to gain wind, would blast my reputation for ever, and lose me the favour and confidence of Narcissus. I pray you, let me go."

"Down on your marrow-bones, fellow!" reiterated Bull-dog, in a tone of voice which plainly enough showed that he was not to be trifled with. "What care I about your rank and dignity! You have disgraced yourself by your ill behaviour to this illustrious lady, and begging her pardon will diminish your degradation rather than increase

it. You have thought proper to forget her exalted rank and situation.—How can you presume to think that your own will be remembered?”

“I will promise never to offend again—pray let that suffice! Nay, I will pledge my honour to the assurance,” returned the trembling Eildown.

Bull-dog looked at him a moment with the utmost contempt. “The honour of a man who has no gallantry, no respect for the fair sex, is but a very slight pledge; I will not take it; it shall have no currency with me; so down, down upon your marrow-bones, or by the blood of the saint——” and he laid his hand on his sword.

The motion was sufficient to drive away all further hesitation from the mind

of Eildown, who most mechanically and involuntarily dropped upon his knees, and muttered out the apology, which Bull-dog dictated, expressing his penitence for his past vile misbehaviour, and craving forgiveness on the condition that he should offend no more. And no sooner had he concluded the mortifying task, than he started up, and was making a precipitate movement towards the door, when he was again stopped by the determined Bull-dog, who, gently taking him by the arm, whispered in his paralyzed ear that there was still the ceremony of kicking to be performed, and that he anticipated such most beneficial consequences from the performance of it, that he would by no means consent to postpone or to dispense with it.

Poor Eildown's ague-fit came on

again. "I have a disorder," whispered he to Bull-dog, "which any violent agitation of the part will be sure to renew with terrible violence; and as I am but recently recovered from a severe attack of it, I pray you make no assault on me which may put my life in jeopardy."

"Thy life is very valuable, in good truth," returned Bull-dog, relaxing a little from his firmness; and Lady Charlotte, who considered the mortification which Eildown had undergone as quite adequate to his offence, interfered, and begged Bull-dog to be satisfied with the punishment he had already inflicted; and, in consideration of her interference, the veteran consented; and Eildown, fearful lest he should retract his resolution, sprang out of the room, and, in a few moments, reached the street, returning his most fervent thanks to Hea-

ven that he had got out of the scrape so well as he did. And all the way home did this pot-valiant Mercury curse his own folly and stupidity, which had hurried him into the disgrace he had met with, and vent his spleen now and then most audibly against the sneaking cowardice of those who, no doubt, had persuaded Narcissus to send him upon the devilish errand. He vowed, however, that in future no inducement should persuade him to call on Lady Charlotte again, let the cause of his visit be never so opposite to what it had now been; for he felt no kind of inclination to face her a third time on any business whatever.—Twice he had been in danger through his readiness to step between father and daughter, and twice, he protested, should limit the number of his expeditions in this quarter; for he found, to his own cost, that he had neither taste, capacity,

nor courage, to go through such undertakings.

In the midst of these silent vows, he arrived at the castle, where he found Narcissus eagerly waiting his arrival to hear the particulars of the interview before his mother should arrive. Calderagh was with him, agitated by a curiosity scarcely less inferior to that of his master. No sooner, however, did they set eyes on their Mercury, who came panting into the room, with his wig stuck *a-peak*, his eyes wildly staring, and his teeth still chattering from the violence of the recent shock, than they began to anticipate nothing but disappointment; and Narcissus could scarcely find power to ask him how far he had succeeded.

After a countless number of breaks and hesitations, Eildown contrived to get

through his tale up to the moment of Bull-dog's appearance ; and the brightening countenance of Narcissus seemed to say, The rascal has been quizzing me ! he has succeeded after all. Scarcely had the sentiment flashed across his face, however, before Eildown told of the interference of the veteran soldier, and, in a moment, Calderagh turned pale, and Narcissus, passing from one extreme of feeling to the other, could scarcely find language in which to embody the rage he felt. He stormed and swore, and stamped, and vowed vengeance against the insolent intruder, who had dared to thrust himself into the secrets and private affairs of the family, in which he was nothing more than a visitor. And this anger increased as Eildown proceeded to the recapitulation of his own disgrace, and to the detail of the humiliation he was obliged to undergo as the condition of his escape.

“ And did you really go on your knees, and make an apology to the termagant young hussey ?” asked Narcissus, in a tone scarcely audible.

“ What could I do, my lord ?” returned Eildown ; “ I had no alternative, and I thought myself, in fact, very fortunate to get away, and to have the kicking part of the business remitted, which, I assure you, my Lord, I dreaded infinitely more than you may be aware of, and would have given all I possess to have avoided !”

“ Egad !” cried Calderagh, “ I’ll be sworn your honour quaked pretty much at the prospect of the visit it anticipated from Bull-dog’s foot !”

“ What can be done ?” cried Narcissus—“ I from this moment shall mortally

hate this Bull-dog, for thwarting my views, and, as for my mother, when she comes presently, I shall have some story to *cook* up for her, or otherwise I shall be plunged into a new dilemma. Advise me how to proceed, Eildown; for it is through your cowardice and bad management that I have been brought into all this scrape. Would to God I had gone myself!"

"Would to God you had, my lord!" responded Eildown; "and so I have since wished a hundred times; then I should, at least, have saved my credit and my pride from a severe mortification; but God only knows, whether your lordship would have succeeded a whit better. With respect to the affair, as it now stands, I should advise that the transaction be altogether hushed up, for should it get wind, and be blazoned

about and commented upon by all the scribblers of the day, we should all cut but a sorry figure. For instance now, what a pretty groupe we should make for a caricature or a lampoon !”

“ You wish to have your part in the affair omitted, I suppose,” said Narcissus ; “ and then as to the rest of the performance, it might e’en go forth, and meet the comments of the world, and it would.—You would not give yourself much concern about the effect or the issue, I’ll be sworn.”

“ Natural enough, my lord !” added Calderagh—“ for Eildown to wish to preserve his honour from the gripe of the gossips and libellers on the estate ; and as your lordship knows from experience, as well as any lord that ever owned the manor, that they are pretty

numerous, and ready to lay hold on every trifle for their commentaries and misrepresentations, I think it would be most advisable to muffle the matter."

Narcissus agreed to the suggestions of his advisers, and the transaction was ordered to be kept secret, and Bull-dog to be treated as before it occurred.

CHAPTER XXIII.

The Author introduceth a new Character who dealeth in Futurity—His mysterious Manner exciteh much Notice, and procures Admission to Lady Charlotte—His Predictions—An Accident.

IN the neighbourhood of Lady Charlotte's residence, there lived a painter of some celebrity, who of late years had omitted the practice of sketching the outward features of nature, and taken to pourtraying the countenance of fate; or in other words, he had withdrawn his attention, in a great degree, from the exercise of his own proper art, and di-

rected it to the study of astrology, so that go when you would to see him, he was always wrapped up in the profundity of his own meditations, holding conferences with the stars, or drawing mysterious lines and figures in a blank paper book, which invariably lay before him; and from these mysterious lines and figures, duly interpolated and interlined, he would tell you, as he pretended, every feature of that part of your life which was yet to come, as well as the portion which had passed away; and by the accuracy with which he did the letter, he left you to judge of the probable correctness of his predictions. In truth he was a man who had imposed so much upon the credulous tenantry, that even the highest classes, and those who were supposed to possess most intellect, and were most remote from superstitious influence, flocked to

his house, to gain a little insight into the variegations of their future existence; and, as he found the new business fill his time and his pockets, he gradually deserted the use of the brush and the pencil, and, in due time, became celebrated as a most learned astrologer, and one whose prophecies were certain of verification.

This mystery-explaining knave had some interest among the attendants of Lady Charlotte, and was continually sounding in their ears the wonders of his art by which he was enabled to foresee all which would befall Lady Charlotte, and as, in speaking on this subject he assumed a very particular mysteriousness of deportment and conversation, the *sagacious* domestics instantly imagined that there might be some very dreadful feature in the future fate of

their lady, which he would not impart to them, yet which her ladyship ought to be acquainted with, in order that she might endeavour to avoid it. The buzz gradually spread itself throughout the household, and soon reached the ears of Leedsley, who was the tutoress of Lady Charlotte; but who, having superior sense to the inferior attendants, treated the subject as an old mother's tale without meaning or consequence attached to it. Day after day, however, passing on, and the conversation of the household becoming still more universal and unequivocal on the subject, Leedsley resolved to see the astrologer herself, and to hear from his own mouth what this mysterious manner of his pretended. She accordingly desired him to be sent to her private apartment, that she might have the opportunity of questioning him without fear of interruption,

and satisfy herself whether he was merely the dupe of his own credulity and obstinate attachment to an obsolete science, or whether he was an impostor who only sought to excite alarm for the purpose of self-emolument.

The astrologer came, and assuming an air of self-importance, required to know the pleasure of Leedsley, who replied, "I understand, Sir, that you are a person that holds correspondence with the stars, thence deriving information respecting the destinies of mankind; and further, that in speaking of the fate of our beloved Lady Charlotte, you have assumed much mysteriousness of manner and conversation. What may all this mean?"

"I am what you have expressed me to be," replied the conjuror, "a disci-

ple of the exalted science of astrology, which gives to me a prescience unknown to the illiterate. I have cast the nativity of the Lady Charlotte, as near as I am able, from incorrect information, and there is much black and portentous matter evident therein ; but before I point out the malignities I have discovered, I could wish her ladyship to answer me a few questions herself, which are necessary to be resolved before I can make such a calculation as may be depended upon. Excuse me from saying further."

Leedsley endeavoured in vain to procure further information on the subject ; the only result of the interview was, that she satisfied herself that the man was, in fact, what he pretended to be, and believed that he could discover what events would befall Lady Charlotte. " Well,"

said she, "now and then, he may come something near an occurrence, which chance might bring about, but it is impossible that he can open the *arcana* of futurity."

With this conviction, she decided not to say a word to Lady Charlotte on the subject, but let the impression which had been made by the prediction gradually die away, confident as she felt that nothing could arise from it. She was deceived, however, in her expectations; for instead of dying away, it daily acquired new strength, and ultimately reached the Lady Charlotte, through the medium of one of her gentlemen.

"Bless me, Leedsley," said Lady Charlotte, one day, while sitting with her tutoress, "I understand there is some astrologer about here, who has

been taking a great deal of pains to discover all about my future fate. Have not you heard any thing about him, Leedsley?"

Leedsley was puzzled with the question, fearing that Lady Charlotte might feel offended at her silence on the subject, if she acknowledged she had known the circumstance before ; and, at the same time, having an insufferable objection to tell an untruth. After a slight pause, however, she returned,—“ Yes, madam, I have heard of the man, but consider him to be little better than an impudent impostor, pretending to a supernatural knowledge. I have forbore to trouble your ladyship with a detail of his tricks and absurdities, which are only calculated to amuse and confound weak minds.”

“ But there can be no harm, Leedsley,

in hearing what he has to say," said Lady Charlotte. "I feel a very strong curiosity to know all about it; and it will serve us very well to laugh at, you know, Leedsley. So we will even have him here, and hear from his own lips what it is he knows!"

The tutoress said every thing in her power to dissuade Lady Charlotte from her intentions; but every thing she said only tended to strengthen the resolution of her lady, who, to all her arguments replied that as it would serve to amuse her a little, why should she be refused the trifling gratification. The governess then urged the anger which Narcissus would feel, did the circumstance come to his ears, and it would not be surprising if he were to suspect that they were plotting some mischief against him, as he was really grown very mistrustful of late.

To this, however, Lady Charlotte answered, that nothing she could do would please her father, and therefore she had quite given up endeavouring to do that; and, as long as she did not displease her mother, she should satisfy herself; "and I know," said she emphatically, "that my dear mother loves me too much to refuse me a moment's gratification of this description."

Leedsley could urge nothing further against this appeal. She, therefore, reluctantly consented to dispatch a servant to the astrologer to desire his immediate attendance upon her ladyship; and, in the mean time, Leedsley endeavoured, by every effort in her power, to persuade Lady Charlotte that no kind of reliance whatever was to be placed on the predictions of these pretended astrologers, whose only object it was to

extract money from the weak and credulous. She assured Lady Charlotte that she was terrified to death, lest it should be known throughout the manor that her ladyship had listened to one of these impostors, especially as there was a law to punish people who pretended to tell fortunes, and they were just going to encourage one to break this law ; and it was quite impossible that it could be kept secret, for all the servants in the castle would know the astrologer, and in five minutes it would be reported every where around that Lady Charlotte had sent for the cunning man ! “ Poh, nonsense,” cried Lady Charlotte, “ you are a very foolish woman : don’t you fear any thing, but lay all the blame on me ; say I *would* have the astrologer, and that I heard of him by accident ; and say, if you like, that you did every thing in your power to make me be a

little more reasonable, and all that, but that, like a giddy fool as I was, I would have my own way, and sent for the man in direct opposition to all you could say, and there's the whole upshot of the business ; for see the astrologer I will."

And she had scarcely done speaking these words before the astrologer was announced, and admitted into the presence of the ladies.

" Come here, my good man," cried Lady Charlotte—" come here and sit down by me, for you look like a gentleman. I understand you can tell me all about my future fate. Now make haste and answer what I am going to ask you. When shall I marry, and where? What will happen to my mother? And when shall I be able to come at the possession of this manor

and to do as I please? And when will my poor grandpapa be better? Now, do make haste, and tell me all these things, and if they should all come true, as you say, I will reward you very handsomely, that's what I will."

The astrologer bowed very low, and returned—"Madam, I shall be most proud to inform your ladyship of all that, by virtue of my art, I am able to discover. But your ladyship must first of all inform me as to the moment and hour of your birth, before I can tell you any thing with accuracy. When I am possessed of this information, I will, to the utmost of my talent, give to your ladyship all the information which you desire of me."

Upon this Lady Charlotte opened a small desk, and taking therefrom an

elegant little pocket-book, she read the particulars which the astrologer required, and which he wrote down, and then taking a rule and a book from his pocket, he began to draw lines and parallels, and triangles and quadrangles and intersecting lines, and a prodigious number of heathenish signs, while Lady Charlotte sat and looked over him with the utmost solicitude and curiosity depicted on her countenance ; and every now and then her ladyship would involuntarily break out and exclaim—" Well, what have you found out ?"

The astrologer went on, adding mystery to mystery, and rendering confusion still more confounded, multiplying perplexities, and creating a labyrinth of unintelligible figures, and having finished the form of his many-angular drawing, he told her ladyship, that before

he could come to the completion of the nativity which he was casting, he must return to his own house, and compare his labour by reference to the profoundest authorities ; he could assure her ladyship, “ that, although she had many difficulties to contend with, she would ultimately triumph over her enemies, and rise to a degree of splendour and happiness which had never been equalled by any lady of the manor, since the commencement of the time when the manor-rolls began.”

“ Very well,” said Lady Charlotte—
“ and whom am I to be married to, and when ? Make haste and answer me my question.”

“ The name of the person, my lady, I am not able to communicate,” replied the astrologer—“ but I will give you a

description. He will be tall, about five feet nine, somewhat inclined to corpulency, fair complexion, auburn hair, small ears, Roman nose, long chin, whiskers——”

“ O God !” screamed Lady Charlotte——“ whiskers ! Don’t, for Heaven’s sake, mention the filthy word to me. Lord, I should die at the thoughts of them !”

“ Fear not, my lady,” replied the smiling astrologer——“ his whiskers will not be red, but of a beautiful auburn : his disposition and manners amiable ; and he will marry for love, and not for political convenience, so that your married state will be a happy one indeed.”

“ Thanks, friend, for your good information,” answered Lady Charlotte——

"then my father won't have his way always. But when will it be?"

"Not yet, my lady; some revolutions of years must take place," returned the cunning man—"before the sun shall rise on your bridal bed."

"And what can you tell me of the future condition of my mother? When will she triumph over *her* enemies?" asked Lady Charlotte.

The astrologer shook his head—"My lady, I cannot speak of her future condition, unless I had also cast her nativity, which I can do whenever your ladyship may be pleased to express a wish to that effect, and will procure the time of her birth; and I trust the issue will be as propitious as yours."

“Well, then,” said the curious and inquisitive Lady Charlotte—“is this all you can tell me? Can’t you tell respecting my grandfather? Nor when I shall come to the possession of this manor? I am eager to know all of which you can inform me. Is there any thing very bad which will befall me?”

The astrologer paused, and then replied—“It will be some time before the manor will descend to you, but whenever you come to the possession, you will take it under happy auspices, which it will depend on your own management to improve. The tenantry will look to you for relief from heavy burdens, and emancipation from countless difficulties under which they will have long laboured. They will hail your accession to the manor as the opening of a more promising period, for they will be ground

down by a system of oppression to the very extreme of adversity and discontent ; their freedom abridged ; their rights violated ; their rents raised ; their land impoverished ; and their prospects blackened. Previous to this period, your ladyship will have afflictions of a heavy nature to encounter and overcome ; but who is there, madam, who can boast exemption from the natural ills of life ? I repeat to your ladyship that they will be such as will sorely oppress you, and cause you a weighty burden of sorrow. But be satisfied, madam, with the assurance that you will subdue them."

"And cannot you tell me of what description these sorrows may be, that I may make up my mind to expect them?" asked Lady Charlotte.

"I cannot give your ladyship a deci-

sive answer," returned the astrologer, "till I have referred to my authorities.—All in my power to reveal I will ; but of that which is not certain it will be wise to remain silent, since it could answer no good purpose to alarm you on insufficient ground."

Saying this the astrologer rose to take his leave, but just as he was quitting the apartment, he cast another glance at Lady Charlotte, and exclaimed, "Prepare yourself, madam, for a speedy assault upon your repose, which is now planning ; probably energy may counteract conspiracy ; but there are those who are now at work to injure your happiness, and a violent attempt may perhaps soon be made to force you into a marriage against your will."

"That must be with Orangecraft, I

am sure," cried Lady Charlotte, when the man had left the room ; " he could not possibly mean with any body else."

" Pay no attention to his falsities, my lady," exclaimed Leedsley, who had marked with much concern the great attention which Lady Charlotte had paid to the predictions of the astrologer, and the interest she appeared to take in all his actions as well as his words. " I am surprised, Madam, that you should think for a moment of any thing that has fallen from him. The gravity and consequence which the fellow assumed were well calculated to deceive those who were not experienced in the tricks of the world ; but to my thinking, the best reward he could have would be the stocks, the pillory, or the whipping-post !"

" You grow quite morose and disagree

able, Leedsley," returned Lady Charlotte. "Did I not send for the man and ask him to shew me his art? And he has done no more than yield obedience to my desires; and surely obedience is not become such a crime as you would make it out to be. You don't imagine that I pay any attention to what he has said! It amuses me, I confess, but as to giving it credit, why you surely cannot think——"

At this moment a loud crash was heard in the adjoining room. Leedsley turned pale, and Lady Charlotte exclaimed, "Lord! as sure as I live, this is the first mischief the astrologer predicted!"—And saying this, she violently rang the bell, when a footman entered, and seeing the two ladies palsied with apprehension, bending themselves down on the sofa, was hastily running towards

them, when Lady Charlotte, pointing to the door which divided the apartments, exclaimed, "The dressing-room ! the dressing-room ! What noise was it ?"—The servant disappeared in a moment, and soon afterwards returned with a lovely young kid in his arms, which had recently been given to Lady Charlotte, and which, seeing itself in a mirror in the room adjoining, in gamboling with the reflection, made violent blow at the mirror, and had dashed it in a thousand pieces, and inflicted on itself some deep wounds.

Lady Charlotte's apprehensions now gave way to her grief on perceiving the injury her favourite had received ; but she could not avoid laughing at her own folly, which had so soon realized one of the astrologer's predictions ; and probably the reflections she made on this proof

of her credulity did more towards the re-establishment of reason in her mind than if Leedsley had moralized to her ladyship for six weeks.

CHAPTER XXIV.

The Author conducteth his Reader back to Lady Puggilla, and sheweth how Narcissus cheated her—Puggilla's dream, and its effects upon Narcissus—Its continued consequences—Dinner party—Narcissus continues melancholy—Visit to a theatre—Unfortunate rencontre—Sovereign remedy.

SCARCELY had Narcissus recovered from the shock his composure had received, in consequence of the failure of Eildown's message, before Lady Puggilla, still glowing with an unabated desire of revenge upon her grand-daughter, came to the castle, anxious to learn

the result of the visit which she expected Narcissus to have made. And here, gentle reader, it may not be amiss to digress from the straight-forward path for a moment, just to impress upon thy mind that even lords and ladies of manors, and such other distinguished persons as those whom mankind ought to look for example, are by no means destitute of a common portion of frailties, infirmities, and so forth ; and that if Heaven had not kindly exempted them from the responsibility which attaches to wrong, they might, by and bye, woe to tell ! be subject to the same punishment as their vassals, which really would be intolerably cruel, since it would place all ranks upon a level, and destroy the distinctions which Providence has decreed as necessary to the harmony of nature. In the conduct of Lady Puggilla, for example, malice and revenge were as

conspicuous as they could have been in the character of any meaner individual, and sought for precisely the same vulgar means of gratification. And Narcissus was stained with obstinacy and spite, mingled with a little of that qualification which the Romans gave to Janus, the possession of two faces : so that the deputy-lord could put on one before his mother or any other friend, and substitute another for it as soon as they had quitted his presence.

On this occasion, no sooner did Lady Puggilla demand what was the result of his visit, than with a most ready and unembarrassed air, Narcissus exclaimed, " Oh, my dear mother ! every thing is as you can wish ! I have given the young hussy such a lesson as she will not forget for some time, I'll be sworn ! I have taught her the duty which is due

from a child to her grandmother ! You will have no trouble with her again !”

The old lady chuckled with delight at the idea that her revenge was satisfied.—
“Well,” said she, “and did the young hussy appear to repent of her impertinence to me ? Did she intreat my pardon, and give her promise never again to outrage my feelings ?”

Narcissus answered in the affirmative.
“But you don’t tell me, Narcissus, whether you chastised Miss or not. I hope you were not too gentle, but that you recollected the old and very true maxim which always regulated my conduct, *Spare the rod and spoil the child !*”

“Why,” said Narcissus, “I could not bestow the manual chastisement I had intended, because Bull-dog came

into the room, and, enraged as I was, I still thought it right to restrain my feelings, in some degree, in the presence of a stranger. But I shall not forget what I left undone !”

Puggilla's countenance was alternately chequered with a cloud and a smile, as Narcissus spoke, but the smile prevailed when she heard him declare that he would still bestow his correction upon her. “ I trust you will not forget your mother !” said she—“ for I do assure you, my son, never until that hour did I ever experience an attack which has made such a severe and permanent impression upon my feelings !”

“ I will not, mother,” returned Narcissus—“ I will never leave her high spirit unchecked, when I find it thus violating every law of nature, and every

principle of duty. But, by the way, how are we to manage respecting our next party at your castle? Do you have it as we originally intended?

“Why,” answered Puggilla, “to say the truth, I think it will be well to postpone the party altogether. The refusal to admit Germania at our last has made such a commotion all through the manor, that I think we had better put off this second festival altogether, unless you have made up your mind to meet her there, and thus to give her a triumph over you. I shall interfere no further in the business, for I understand that the tenantry make no hesitation to use my name in the most disrespectful manner possible, in consequence of what I have already done in it.”

“I will not meet her, I am determined,

mother ; but as for your putting off the party in compliance with the whims of the vassals, I thought you had too much spirit for that. The opinions of the tenantry, when opposed to my own, are just like chaff before the wind, and are scattered just as quickly. I should be ashamed of myself, if I had so little resolution as to give up one single project, one single enjoyment, merely because the vassals were embodied against it. So sovereign is my contempt for their approbation, that if I were careless respecting a measure, or even inclined to abandon it, the very idea that by so doing I should coincide with their sentiments, would induce me to return and adhere to it with more firmness than ever. I would not postpone the party were it mine, no, not for an hour ; I would rather expedite it, to show to the tenants how anxious I was for the

opportunity to convince them how thoroughly I despised their opinions, and how resolutely I was bent upon retaining and acting upon my own."

"My dear Narcissus," returned Lady Ruggilla—"all that doctrine might do very well if only carried to a moderate extent: but take my word for it, it may be overstepped, and then the consequence might be dangerous to him who rashly made the experiment. Last night, Narcissus, I had a most distressing dream. I thought I saw Carolus without a head; yes, that very Carolus whom the tenantry robbed of his manor and his life because he did not display a sufficient regard to the interest of his vassals. Methought this murdered lord came to me, and in an awful tone bid me point out to my son Narcissus, the

danger which will uniformly arise from too great a defiance of public opinion, and too great an opposition to public welfare. He bade me tell you that the inordinate thirst after pleasure, and the excessive indulgence in sensual enjoyments, had lost more manors their lords, and more lords their manors, than any other cause which had ever existed. He told me that courtezans and favourites were the caterpillars of a court, which preyed upon its vitals, grubbed up its prosperity in its growth, and withered all its comeliness. He warned you against flatterers and false friends ; men who will varnish over your evil deeds and improprieties while the sun shines upon you, but who will blacken your virtues, and turn all your best qualities into crimes, if a cloud shall have obscured the brightness of your prospects. He exclaimed, that had he acted upon these maxims, he had

not been sacrificed to the fury of his vassals, but instead of staining the executioner's axe with his vital stream, might have lived many years longer, and have magnified the prosperity of the manor. Moreover, he particularly dwelt upon the folly of resigning the management of the estate to the hands of women, or wicked or unskilful men ; the former, he said, would not hesitate to betray their paramour for a new intrigue, nor to sacrifice the manor to a bribe of pleasure ; and as to the latter, their object was only self-interest ; they toiled, and consulted, and discussed, and intrigued, made war or peace, hatched or punished conspiracies or frauds just as it seemed most likely to advance their own views, to enrich their coffers, or to consolidate their power, and would fawn on the master whose destruction they planned."

"Gods, mother!" interrupted Narcissus,—"'twas but the phantom of a feverish brain ; the overflowings of a disordered spirit. I wonder much you could remember such a tissue of nonsense and absurdity ; and still more I wonder that it should have the power to distress you. I thought you possessed a mind too strong to be thus easily unhinged ; banish the gloomy shadowy impression from your brain, and be not scared nor startled by phantoms."

"I am not usually weak in these things, Narcissus," replied Lady Puggilla—"but after my fright had awakened me, I lay for an hour, and could not banish the monstrous images from my mind's eye ; and when worn down by fatigue and watching, I dropped asleep again, the ghastly vision still haunted me, the spectre remained, me-

thought, where it stood before, and beckoned me to follow it, and then methought it led me through the vaults of your castle, and showed me all your favourites who had met for public business, steeping themselves with wine, and neglecting the great objects of their meeting, until overpowered by the liquor they one by one dropped senseless upon the floor. Next he conducted me to a rich apartment, where, methought, I saw you, surrounded by all your great visitors, sitting at a costly board, spread with every luxury, while around you sat a hundred others, gluttoning and gormandizing, while not a thought of any one present wandered beyond the good things before them: all was mirth and hilarity, and every countenance beamed with rapture. While I gazed upon the illustrious throng, the spectre conducted me to a window, and bade

me look over the manor. I looked, and saw Germania imploring the tenantry to assist her to regain her rights, while they swore to defend her to the last drop of their blood. I saw Lady Charlotte carried on the shoulders of another huge multitude of vassals, and bearing in her hands all the symbols of power. I was then ordered to cast my eyes to the right, where I beheld such a prodigious assembly of tenants, that I thought the whole of the occupiers of the manor must have been gathered together, and they appeared to be actuated by some strange agitation, of which I enquired the cause, but received for answer nothing more than—"Wait and be satisfied!" I had not suppressed my curiosity many minutes before a small opening in the crowd exposed to my view a sight so full of horror, that

I shrieked, swooned, and awoke trembling with dismay."

"And what was this terrible sight, mother?" asked Narcissus, whose countenance had during the latter part of the recital, turned deadly pale.

The answer of Lady Puggilla, however, we leave it to the imagination of the reader to supply, as we have not been able to decypher it correctly in the ill-written manuscript from which we have extracted this anecdote. The documents merely inform us in addition that its effect upon Narcissus was neither inconsiderable nor momentary, but that his looks immediately became wild and haggard, and that it was not until long after the departure of his mother, when some of his illustrious visitors came to dinner (for he had made a large

and splendid party for the day) that he acquired any tolerable degree of serenity.

Scarmouth was the first who perceived any alteration in the spirits and manner of Narcissus ; for, notwithstanding all his exertions to wear his accustomed appearance, he could not expel from his visage a mixture of apprehension and sorrow which appeared there, and which tinted his whole complexion with a most sombre hue. When he smiled, it was a smile which had more of affliction than of pleasure in it ; it betrayed itself to be a spurious and illegitimate offspring ; and, when he attempted to pass a jest, it was so heavy and cumbrous in its foundation and texture, that it never reached the ear for which it was designed ; and ever and anon he would lapse into a melancholy

mood, and his eyes would wander round the room with a strange expression, as though gazing on vacancy, yet seeking some object which floated on the desert air. His frame would sometimes tremble violently, as though shaken by some strong convulsion of the soul: and when he raised his glass it was with such an unsteady hand, that one third of its contents usually found its way back to the table.

These symptoms of agitation and dullness of mind could not escape observation: to Scarmouth they were first evident; and Scarmouth instantly pointed out the indisposition of Narcissus to his father; and the latter, after assuring himself of the circumstance, spread the observation to another of the guests, and thus it passed on to the controller of Freezegaul, who drew near to Narcissus, and seizing a favourable opportu-

nity, enquired into the cause of his agitation.—“Oh, my dear lord,” said he, “your emotion is too visible to escape notice, and preys upon your spirits too much to be observed without some inquiry.”

“It is nothing, my dear lord,” returned Narcissus, attempting to rally himself into a tolerable degree of pleasantness, “nothing but a slight affection of the head ; and a little more wine, by creating a more considerable one, will completely eradicate the lesser. Let the wine flow in streams profusely, and anon I shall give you no cause to suspect me of want of spirits, nor of want of ability to participate most freely and fully in the pleasures of the table.”

The Controller was compelled to remain content with this equivocal reply ;

which, however, appeared to produce one beneficial effect, since it induced Narcissus to make still greater exertions to appear in the *qui vive*, in order completely to do away the impression which seemed to have taken root in the breasts of his guests. He was also mortified at the notice which his folly, as he termed it, had attracted, as he considered it one of the most prominent duties of the man of fashion and elegance, whenever he was surrounded at his own table, to take especial care that not a gloomy-heart nor an inquisitive eye should be visible throughout the circle. Yet he himself had not only set an example of gloominess and discontent to his own guests, but had shewn it in so prominent a degree that it could not escape the notice even of his friends; and since he had so unfortunately betrayed his indisposition of mind, he now resolved to make

a double effort to retrieve his character for conviviality—a character which he had enjoyed through life, and which never, until this moment, he was conscious of having once forfeited. Accordingly, he began now to play the *bon vivant* to perfection, to laugh, to sing, to drink and crack his jokes to such an excessive degree, that, by over-doing the matter, he more than ever satisfied those who had been accustomed to participate in his Bacchanalian frolics, that his previous inequality of manner was not without some strong foundation; and their opinions received a still stronger corroboration, when, after he had drunk his seven or eight bottles, and was thus thrown off his guard, he returned to his former singularity of conduct, which became now so conspicuous to all, that it was thought necessary to propose some new amusement to divert his attention.

Not very distant from the castle there was an elegant mansion, in which some men and women of ability amongst the tenants, and some of the vassals of other manors accustomed themselves to theatrical performances of a superior cast, being generally enacted in a language belonging to another manor, so that it was mostly adapted to the relaxation of the higher rank of tenants, and to those who had possessed peculiar advantages of education. Thither it was proposed to go, and an easy consent was obtained from Narcissus; who was still ready to acquiesce in any scheme which promised to increase the amusement of his guests. Accordingly, the whole of the gay and splendid group, having first sent off a messenger to inform the proprietors of the mansion of their intention, set out for this scene of tumultuous happiness. The magnificent variety of the

glittering scene—the concourse of beauty and elegance—the music and performance, appeared to produce a felicitous effect; and the gloomy impressions seemed to be most rapidly wearing away when suddenly a tumult arose in a distant part of the mansion, a thousand voices at once shouted Germania, and to the astonished and paralyzed view of the whole group, in a few moments afterwards Germania herself entered the house.

The tumult which followed this most singular rencontre exceeded all description: the tenants, with the loudest vociferations, hailed the persecuted wife of Narcissus, who returned her acknowledgments, as did Narcissus also, who imagined, perchance, that the welcome greetings of the people were rather designed for him than for Germania. The

unequivocal testimony of the vassals, however, soon corrected his error, and he immediately sank again into his old fit of despondency; the impression of his mother's dream revived in his memory, and his inattention, not only to the performance of the evening, but even to all the audience, and to his own company, was so great and particular, that it was soon evident that other means must be discovered to work a change in his manners, and to renovate his spirits, and therefore the gay group once more took their departure for the castle.

When Narcissus reached home, however, it was discovered that all the remedies of a consolatory nature which politeness or flattery could offer to him, were of no avail. Whatever the impression might be (and much and useless conjecture was formed upon the subject), par-

tial correctives signified nothing, and all the illustrious strangers were plunged in despair and sorrow, when Mahony luckily recommended Curaçoa. The very name appeared to have a charm in it, since it induced the deputy-lord to raise up his head, and give his friend a smile of approbation; and the application of the bottle to his lips soon brought back the wandering recollection and spirits of the gay Narcissus; a few glasses seemed entirely to dissipate the hypochondriac affection which had locked up his faculties, and before day-break the cure of the melancholy was complete, every care was soon banished from his lordly bosom, even thought itself entirely forsook him; and by Mahony and Bumfield, to the great joy of his guests, he was carried to bed in a state of happy and enviable insensibility.

CHAPTER. XLV.

Sheweth that the Visitors of the Fever-isle are about to depart—An old Friend re-appears, and is well received by Narcissus—Failure of one Plan, and formation of another.

THE time had flitted away so rapidly amidst the continual variety of amusements, since the Controller arrived with his friends in the manor of Fever-isle, that, when the noble visitors began to review the period which had already elapsed, and to reflect upon the state in which they had left their own manors, and the immensity of business which was

left unfinished on the other side of the broad ditch, they began to see the necessity which existed for their making preparations for their departure. There was also another reason which probably induced them to shorten their stay in the domain, and that was the unpleasant disputes which harassed the family of the deputy-lord, and which, of necessity, created a great deal of uneasiness, and a number of unpleasant sensations in the bosoms of the strangers. They were aware that they were welcomed by the tenants with sincerity; they fancied also that Narcissus himself was very well pleased with their company, as they accommodated themselves pretty well to his habits; but they were also aware that Germania, the wife of Narcissus, could feel no pleasure in their visit, since, in her absence, the castle had to mourn the absence of its legitimate mistress and

its brightest ornament; to the Lady Charlotte, also, the daughter of Narcissus, and, after him, the next heir to the manor, their visit, instead of imparting pleasure, had possibly been the source of its opposite. These considerations necessarily occasioned no inconsiderable sensations of regret in their bosoms, and might possibly have had their influence over the determination of the visitors when they announced their intention to leave.

And, reasoning on the ground that lords feel something after the same manner as vassals, and are gifted with nearly similar outlets and inlets of reasoning, and expressing pleasure, it is by no means wonderful that they should feel rather uncomfortable during their stay; for, in the first place, Germania's father had been a particular friend of the Lord

of Brushall, and had been held in very high estimation by him, and the latter was considered as peculiarly bound to the memory of the former, and to his surviving family; and he must, therefore, have felt some strange emotions when he called to mind the very ungrateful manner in which he now conducted himself towards the daughter of his former associate, having never once called upon her nor noticed her in the least since his arrival in the manor. Injurious as this neglect must have proved to the susceptible heart of Germania, it caused still more pain to the heart whence it originated. A review of the purity of her own conduct was a sure remedy for her anguish; she had not merited neglect, and she was supported under it by a sentiment of virtuous indignation and pious fortitude which innocence only could possess. The Lord of Brushall,

however, had no such inward supporter ; whenever he looked into his motives, and although he never willingly did this, conscience would now and then invert his eye, and compel him to contemplate himself, he saw there nothing but ingratitude, foul base ingratitude, and rash, unfounded, and cruel prejudice. Yet he could not visit Germania without causing offence to Narcissus ; and, as he was the guest of the latter, the customs of polished society, required that he should avoid such a probability. This was the ground, therefore, on which he justified himself ; and weak and untenable as it was in the eye of morality, it was a good and valid defence according to the rules of fashion. He therefore turned his back upon morality, and determined that fashion alone should regulate his conduct, since her dictation, in this instance, ought to have the most power.

Weak as this argument may appear to the zealous stickler for social, and moral, and religious obligations, nine out of ten of the giddy world every day in their practices prove it to be the current method of reasoning; for morality is grown such a thread-bare subject, and hath, indeed, so very little to recommend it, being in general very little inclined to accommodate itself to the prevailing customs of the age, and to the usual bias of public taste, that it hath but comparatively few followers; and of those who pretend to adopt its doctrines, very many more do it from motives of interested convenience than from any purer impulse; while some, although they have nothing of the taint about themselves, have used themselves to look upon it as an embellishment in others, so strongly perverse is the manner and system of the world. Fashion, on the other hand, is

like to beauty, decked in everlasting youth; she preserves her attraction, amidst surrounding changes, unchanged, and not only possesses the power of leading rational beings into the extreme of irrationality, but even of so glossing over the form and countenance of vice and folly, as to make them pass current for virtue and wisdom.

The Controller had a less powerful incitement to visit Germania, since he was bound by no ties to her father, to whom, indeed, he was merely a stranger. He felt, therefore, only the common obligation which gallantry imposes upon all men to protect a helpless woman: this impulse, however, in the present instance, was not sufficiently strong to counterbalance the displeasure of Narcissus, and therefore his lordship declined any interference in the family disputes.

With respect to the Lady Charlotte, Narcissus had doubtless caused it to be told to his visitors, that as her ladyship most obstinately refused to desert her mother, but very undutifully set his wishes at defiance, and was continually gadding backwards and forwards with Germania here, and there, and every where, he did not wish that she should be treated with the same degree of respect as though she was a very dutiful daughter to him: thus making out the obedience of the daughter to the mother to be a crime so heinous in itself as to merit the desertion of every other person, and the privation of all the veneration due to her ladyship's exalted rank and situation in the estate. Although this prohibition, however, extended to the tenants of rank in the manor, they did not in general choose to avail themselves of it, but made her continual tenders of

their most active services, and appeared anxious to enrol themselves amongst her firmest friends. The noble guests, upon the same principle which regulated their conduct towards Germania, palpably slighted Lady Charlotte, lest, by paying attention to the daughter, they might commit an unpardonable offence in the estimation of the father.

Thus stood matters when Orangepraft returned *incog.* to Fever-isle, having strictly obeyed the injunctions of Narcissus, and travelled in such a very secret and mysterious manner that not an individual who had seen him could, by any possibility, recognize him. As soon as he arrived, he instantly waited on Narcissus to receive his farther instructions as to the mode in which he ought to proceed to secure himself the object of his pursuit.

Narcissus received the young lover with open arms, and felt delighted at the astonishing rapidity with which he had made the journey he had undertaken.—
“Be ever as active throughout the residue of the business, Orangegrass,” said he, “and success is our’s. But now for the sequel of our scheme. Is it possible for you to strike out some plan for carrying off the girl without my participation? You have my free permission to act as you please, and I will pledge you my honour that no opposition to your views shall arise in any quarter. Cannot you plan and execute a neat elopement?”

Orangegrass scratched his head, shrugged his shoulders, and looked quite bewildered at the idea of planning a scheme of his own, at the moment when he expected to have found one ready adapted to his hands, for he was, in fact,

but a poor, simple, ungifted youth, and, although he did tolerably well when carrying the plans of others into effect, he possessed no brains which would enable him to strike out any thing original himself. "Upon my word, my lord," said he, stammering at every word he attempted to utter—"Upon my word, I really don't see—that is—I don't know—that is—I have not had time to think upon this business. You must be aware, my lord, that I expected—that is, I hoped that you would have matured a plan, and that it only waited for execution."

"Dolt ! blockhead !" cried Narcissus, intolerably enraged by the stupidity of Orangegrass—"Who but you would have thanked me for leaving to himself the planning as well as the execution of a scheme which would ensure him hap-

piness? Why thou dost not deserve to be blessed, thou most cold-blooded and most stupid of all human beings! Wilt thou make no effort towards promoting the views which thou hast contemplated?"

Roused to something like shame by these taunts, the spiritless lover, in the warmth of the moment, replied—"Very well, my lord, I agree, and I will attempt the thing this night. You have promised that no interruption shall thwart my views. Can you let me have some troops?"

"Troops!" cried Narcissus, astonished---"What need of troops to carry off a poor girl! Surely you and your attendants are sufficient for the purpose. But, hark you! don't attempt the thing without you have spirit to go through

with it, for a failure would ruin us all?"

"Leave me alone to do it!" said Orangegrass---"I'll prove myself something above the simple fool you imagine me to be!" So saying, away moved the disconcerted and mortified lover, racking his brains to little effect, to discover some happy plan of carrying off the damsel.

In the mean time Narcissus began to compliment himself not only on the dexterity with which he had shuffled off his own share of the plot, since he it was who proposed it; but also upon working up the feelings of the young lover to that pitch of enthusiastic daring, upon which he was ready to undertake any plan, however desperate, to retrieve his character. But although Narcissus

was, to a limited degree, gifted with a knowledge of the character of Orange-graft, he only knew sufficient to lead him astray; since he calculated on that as a permanent feeling, which was only a transient ebullition of frenzy, for no sooner did the lover reach the end of the park, than he found his courage and spirit, to undertake the enterprise, very sensibly and rapidly decaying; and most sincerely did he wish that he had never been prevailed on by the deceitful tongue of Narcissus, to travel back again from his own native manor on what was, truly and commonly termed, a wild goose chase. He would have given any one a handsome sum, and the female to boot, who would have had courage and ingenuity enough to personate himself, and to plan and to execute the whole of the transaction. As this could not be done,

he must fain undertake the task himself, or give it up altogether, and to the latter he dared not direct his will, because he found that any pusillanimity on his part might involve his father and his native manor in its serious consequences, as Narcissus was of a very perverse temper, and seldom forgave those who caused any disappointment of hopes on which he had reposed much importance.

On the following morning Narcissus was surprised by a visit from Orange-graft, before he himself was out of bed. "What the devil has brought him back?" asked Narcissus to himself, and then inwardly resumed, "Surely the poor blockhead after all has not attempted and failed!"

The apprehensions of Narcissus were

correct. Orangecraft had failed in his attempt. He had watched about the residence of Lady Charlotte until the evening became grey ; when a carriage drove to the door, and her ladyship, stepping into it, was conveyed away with the utmost rapidity. Orangecraft essayed to pursue, but was soon glad to give up the chase, and, returning to the mansion, by means of a bribe, he discovered whither her ladyship was gone, and that she was not expected to return for several hours. The opportunity seemed favourable to the views of the lover. He instantly hastened home, summoned his servants, and ordered them to station themselves at the top of a bye street, through which Lady Charlotte's carriage was to pass ; the men received strict instructions to stop Lady Charlotte's carriage *en passant*, and to seize her sud-

denly, and carry her off without delay to the borders of the ditch, where she was to be forthwith transported to some other manor. Orangegrass himself took his station about a hundred yards distant, to give the earliest notice in case of alarm on the approach of Lady Charlotte; and here the party waited until dawning day shed its lustre through the streets, when the whole of the group, master and attendants, made the best of their way home again, unsatisfied and confounded at their ill success. It subsequently appeared, that Orangegrass had received false information from the domestic, who, fearing that they were upon no good errand, put them upon a wrong scent, so that before Orangegrass and his party had reached their place of rendezvous, Lady Charlotte was safely lodged at home, and laughing heartily at the whole of the disappointment Orange-

graft would undergo, for she was informed of the whole of the circumstance by the domestic who had been the principal actor.

Narcissus, although inwardly severely mortified by this failure which could only have a tendency to irritate Lady Charlotte against him, and to give her and her mother a new ground of conversation, endeavoured to conceal his feelings, and replied to Orangegrass that he could have much wished it had been otherwise, but that, since fortune had counteracted him in this instance, the only thing which remained was to adopt the other plan which he himself had originally proposed; and with this view, as his visitors were about to leave him, he recommended it to Orangegrass to wait patiently until that period, when they would convey Lady Charlotte to Cranmeadow Lodge, and that once ar-

ranged, the rest of the matter would very easily be accomplished, and the marriage completed.

Orangegraft was overjoyed at the prospect of having his object obtained in the less difficult and troublesome way now proposed, for he felt very little inclination to tempt a second defeat, and had made up his mind rather to have relinquished Lady Charlotte altogether, than to spend another night as he had spent the last, shivering in the street, exposed to the night air, and kept in rack-ing torturing suspense till morning, and then to be covered with mortification. He swore he would much sooner ransack his father's manor throughout for a wife, and take up with any one he could easily find, than give himself so much pains and plague after a giddy young jade, who had already shown him evident

proofs of her spirit, and who, very probably, one day or another, might have taken the liberty of boxing his ears should he chance to vex her.

As Narcissus, however, had proposed his assistance, and the plan he had mentioned appeared very feasible, Orangegraft determined to have another trial, and accordingly it was determined betwixt them that Orangegraft should still remain *incog.* not very far from the castle, that he might be ready on any emergency, or when the plot was fully matured, to perform the part he would have to enact in the drama ; “for, by the Lord,” said Narcissus, “the business shall be completed, and that without any further delay, I am determined. We have been both made the dupes of this wayward girl, and have continued so too long already ; we will now bestir our-

selves, and convince Miss that we know how, and have the power to revenge ourselves upon her. But mind, Orangegrass, you must promise me never to allow Germania to set her foot within your doors ; if she should once be admitted, there will be no end of intrigues against you and me : upon no other condition will I promise my assistance, or what is more, on no other terms will I give my consent to the marriage at all. So give me your resolve."

Orangegrass paused a moment to reflect on the terms. They were easy ; he could have no desire to become acquainted with Germania ; on the contrary he was rather disposed to shun her, since he believed that it was through her influence over Lady Charlotte, that his suit had been abruptly terminated, and himself dismissed. This suspi-

cien rivetted his determination in a moment, and he promptly replied, "I do promise, my lord, never to admit Germania within my mansion; and as to Lady Charlotte, as far as I may have the power, I will prevent her from going after her mother, although, probably, I may not be enabled fully to accomplish this part of the business. I will, however, throw such obstacles and unpleasantries in the way as must ultimately put an end to the hateful connection."

The manner and words of Orange-graft won the heart of Narcissus, who, rapturously taking him by the hand, bid him make himself sure of Lady Charlotte. "By heaven," said he, "but I would compel her to give you her hand, if I drew up an army round her to force her inclination, and to keep a guard

over her until she should have submitted to the consummation. She is your's, my boy ! and your's she shall be ! We will soon have her down to Cranmeadow Lodge, and once there, the day will be our own. Come, Orangegrass, you shall spend a few hours with me, that we may have an opportunity to mature our plans."

Orangegrass consented, and Lady Longbonnet and her brother being announced, who came to make a personal visit, on taking leave of the manor, the whole of the party sat down to a collation of choice fruits, and together talked over the scheme which had been planned for the entrapping of Lady Charlotte, and which was fully approved by all the party.

CHAPTER XXVI.

The Author prepareth his Reader for the Departure of the noble Visitors—Nautical Evolutions—Astonishment of the Visitors—Hot-house Stables—Lovers' parting.

THE time having now expired to which the Controller, the Lord of Brushall, and Lady Longbonnet had limited their visit, they took their leave of Lady Puggilla, who admitted them to a grand private party for that purpose. Before they left her, the two lords assured her ladyship that they never had made a visit which had so delighted and astonished them throughout. They had

seesuch wondrous wealth, and they were sure they should carry its reflection in their mind's eye as long as ever they lived.—They could have formed no idea that any manor in the earth had such an excellent soil and such inexhaustible stocks of manure, and they declared that none but fools would ever think of subduing an estate which was in itself so well provided with the strongest means of defence. The hospitality which had been displayed to them, also, not only in the castle, but by every tenant on the manor, had made a very strong impression upon their minds, and they sincerely wished that their manors should in future be connected together still more closely than ever by the strongest cement of friendship and mutual interest.

Lady Puggilla to all this made very suitable replies, expressing, in her turn,

the great gratification which she and all her family had derived from this friendly visit of the noble personages, and trusting, that by an arrangement between a branch of her own family and one of the Controller's relations, the union between the two estates would be more compact and less liable to dissolution. Her ladyship, however, forbore to make any allusion to the domestic differences which disunited her own family, nor did she once condescend to mention even the names of Germania and Lady Charlotte, who both seemed to be entirely expunged out of the book of her esteem.

The visitors having taken leave of Lady Puggilla, made some calls upon a few of the principal tenantry, who had been particularly marked in their hospitality to the illustrious strangers: but not once did they offer to pay a visit

to the distinguished, but persecuted, mother and daughter. They were left to brood, in obscurity, over the neglects and insults which every day multiplied upon them; and to seek for their only consolation in the soothing reflection, that each shared in the other's sorrows, and that, however thickly the bolts of persecution might fly around them, they could not sever two hearts so closely and inseparably united.

The day being fixed for the commencement of the journey of the visitors back to their own manors, the tenants assembled in immense groups to witness their departure; although there were some who maintained to the last, that they would protract their stay for some time longer, since not one of the immense preparations which had been making for their entertainment in the

castle garden, and the park was yet completed. Every day and night, sabbath and holiday, the workmen had been kept to their work, with a view to have every thing ready before the guests took their flight : and as the affair had cost such a vast sum of money, it did not appear likely that the visitors would take it into their heads to run away from it all just as it was on the eve of its completion. Nay, it became a question, whether such conduct might not be termed an absolute breach of all good breeding, and would not in its consequences, interrupt the friendship between the two manors ; for, to a man of polished taste and habits like Narçissus, a relaxation in the forms and etiquette of the *ton* was a more unpardonable offence than even to speak in favour of Germania.

The result proved, however, that the

tenants who augured thus were mistaken, and that Narcissus in this as in all his other arguments, had principally been anxious to shew his visitors how he could throw away the money of his vassals; for it must either have been evident to him when he began these mighty preparations, that he could never make an end of them in any reasonable time, or else he never thought any thing about their completion, but only wished to show his friends a scene of mighty bustle and business, which would be to them a novelty and a gratifying change from the scenes of devastation they had recently been accustomed to contemplate. No sooner did this idea take possession of the minds of the tenantry, than they began to complain most bitterly, inso-much that Narcissus thought it expedient to endeavour to moderate their discontent by giving it out that, as the noble

visitors could not remain to participate in the splendid festivals that were about to take place in honour of their arrival, the whole should be completed still, according to the original intention, and thrown open for the sole entertainment of the vassals themselves, that they might be enabled to give a loose to pleasure, as some compensation for the patience with which they had endured the evils of war.

This promise certainly produced a very considerable impression, as all the indolent and gay part of the tenantry, which comprised a great majority, were very well pleased at the prospect of enjoying themselves in a stylish manner, and anticipated no slight portion of amusement on the occasion, while another part of the occupiers of the manor raised a terrible outcry against the mea-

sure, as full of moral and political evil, which they endeavoured to prove, by stating that idleness was never in want of excuses and opportunities for its own indulgence, without having any new ones thrown in its way ; and that if the lord of the manor, by this kind of public proceedings, gave a sanction to indolence, to vice and prodigality, he must not wonder if a great number of the tenantry should be induced to follow the example he thus held out to them, and if luxury and relaxation should supersede economy and industry throughout the manor.

They went on to argue that it was through a similar arrangement, that manors, both in ancient and in modern times, had gone to ruin, and become so completely depopulated, that you could scarcely now tell where they lay, nor

what had been their original boundaries ; and what had produced this effect in other cases, might and would produce the same in this ; and they contended that it degraded the dignity of the manor to have recourse to shows and exhibitions, and mock fights with cockle-shell boats, and such other trifling spectacles, which were fitter to amuse children and schoolboys than men of years and experience.

To all this the advocates of the fêtes replied, that it was but right for labour to relax, and for industry to have its enjoyments, that

“ Men are but children of a larger growth,”

and that those who would set their faces against a wholesome and proper enjoyment, such as this presented to the notice of the tenantry, were neither friends to industry nor to any other good qua-

lity, but ought to be scouted out of all society, and banished to some more dull and sombre demesne.

While disputes thus ran high amongst the tenantry, Narcissus conducted his visitors on their way to the ditch; but as they had still a day or two left, they took a circuitous route for the purpose of seeing the manœuvring of the ships of war belonging to the manor, which were all lying at anchor, and ready to exhibit themselves for the gratification of these visitors. In a nook of the manor which admitted the water of the ditch, the noble party accordingly entered elegant boats which had been provided for their reception, and sailed along the edge of the estate, while the various ships fired their guns, hoisted their colours, advanced, tacked, were rigged, unrigged, and went through a thousand

curious evolutions, to the great astonishment of the noble spectators.

“What a powerful manor is this?” exclaimed the controller—“who can stand against its hostility? By the mass, had I been sooner acquainted with all which I have now learned, I should have been a little more tenacious myself about quarrelling with the tenants of Fever-isle, seeing that it is utterly impossible to make any injurious impression upon them. I never saw till this moment, such a display of marine beauty and skill. Lord !, what are the few vessels I have got upon my lake compared to these ! They are nothing, they would all vanish into obscurity by the side of your’s, O most potent deputy of Fever-isle !”

“I pray you, my lord,” said the Lord.

of Brushall, addressing Narcissus—" to grant me a favour! You see yon little walnut-shell which majestically floats across the ditch, and which is cut and zig-zagged and rigged in such a beautiful style, I pray your lordship to grant it to me. It will form a happy diversity among my amusements to see my little bark riding on the billows of a bason of water, set in commotion with a pair of hand-bellows. Then, my lord, I shall have also something like a model of the more magnificent entertainments which are about to give attraction to your spacious parks."

Narcissus took the hand of the Lord of Brushall, and laying his other hand on his heart, bowed most gracefully to the earth, and replied—" Great Lord of Brushall, the walnut-shell is thine. May its nautical evolutions give thee plea-

sure when every other enjoyment becomes stale and monotonous."

Tears gushed into the eyes of the Lord of Brushall, who felt himself proud of his present, having never possessed a vessel before, and, squeezing the hands of the other lords, he exclaimed—"Brothers, be not jealous of my navy ! It will be some time before my marine will multiply or become formidable to your's!"

The vessel was immediately packed up, and put into one of the pockets of the Lord of Brushall's carriage ; and the noble visitors then proceeded to view the yards where the ships of Fever-isle were victualled, repaired, refitted, or built ; and here again the wonder of each was strongly attracted ; and even Narcissus himself, who, notwithstanding he was a native of the manor, and born to possess

it, had never seen these sights before, was so elated with the observations he now made, that he declared he would visit the ditch at least once a year ; and that, if the tenants would not allow him money to do so, he was determined to drink three bottles of Curaçoa less every week, by which means he would have sufficient to indulge himself in this trip without laying himself under any obligations to the vassals, who, to say the best of them, seemed to him a most paltry, niggardly, and close fisted set of fellows as ever he saw.

Having given a due time to the investigation of all the wonders of the yards, and expressed their astonishment and rapture at every individual object they were shown, and having, moreover, given a proper sum of money to the workmen—in some degree analogous both in amount

and in the advice which accompanied it to the liberality of the woman who presented *two-pence* to her husband, with a strict charge not to *make a beast of himself*,—we say, having performed all these very necessary duties, the noble party next resolved to proceed to another part of the manor, on the borders of the ditch, which was much resorted to by persons of all ranks who wished to bathe in the ditch, and where Narcissus had built a castle for himself, and a *hot-house* to keep his horses in, although, as it unfortunately happened in this case, as in most others of the experiments of Narcissus, thought came after the whole was completed instead of before, and after laying out an immense sum of money on this singular species of stable, he found that his horses would not thrive in *hot-houses*, any more than choice *exotic* plants would have matured themselves in.

a stable ; and then he was obliged to abandon his idea, and to leave the magnificent erection to stand merely as a monument of the extravagance, or madness, or folly, or altogether, of the person who could project such a chimerical and absurd speculation.

Hither the royal groupe directed their course ; and, as it seemed ordained by fate that at every step they took about this wonderful manor, their surprise and delight should receive some vast addition, so, it occurred in the present instance ; for, no sooner did they set eyes upon this magnificent castle and the curious hot-house stable attached to it, than they lifted up their hands and eyes, and ejaculated about a score of interjections before they made one single remark which would tend to illustrate whether they were wondering at the *greatness* or

littleness, of the taste of Narcissus. And some persons, though perhaps nothing better than common slanderers, have presumed to assert, that, in these moments something like a sneer was perceptible in their countenances, as though it would say, "Gods ! is it possible that absurdity could be allowed to run into such excesses !" But for this we have only the authority of common rumour to vouch ; and therefore, we will, as in duty and respect bound to do, take a more liberal and likely interpretation of their looks ; and believe that they silently exclaimed, " Gods ! who can equal this Narcissus in splendour and in taste, or the tenantry of the manor in wealth and liberality !" This was a very suitable exclamation, and well-adapted to the occasion, and doubtless, comes much nearer the fact than the other.

“ I never beheld such a splendid hot-house !” said the Lady Longbonnet, as she turned away from the examination of the castle ; “ nor do I recollect to have seen one in this precise form. Pray, my lord, why did you build stalls and mangers for the separation and arrangement of the plants ? The idea is truly novel, but it may be an excellent one for ought. I can tell, and indeed must be so, from the established taste of its projector.”

Narcissus looked a little confused at her ladyship’s mistake, and of her unintentional but severe lampoon upon his taste ; and was some time before he could discover in what way it would be better to undeceive her. “ In the straightforward way,” said Common Sense.—“ No,” said Self-consequence, “ ’twere better to let her remain in error, “ Fool !” said Common Sense again,

"You cannot deceive the others, and they will undeceive her!" Self-consequence made no kind of reply; and Narcissus softly whispered, "Dearest of women, this is a stable, and was built for the horses of your own Narcissus."

Her ladyship was astonished, and felt half inclined to say, "better had it been adapted to the ass who projected it;" but Propriety stepped in and stole away her intention, hinting that it would be foolish to quarrel with him at the instant of their temporary separation, lest he should change his affections into disgust, and she might lose the opportunity of becoming, on a future day, the lady of the manor of Fever-isle. She therefore contented herself with a simple expression of surprise, followed by a brief admiration of the versatility of the fancy which could have hit upon such opposite experiments.

The moment of separation now arrived, for Narcissus was compelled to take his leave of the party on this spot. "Forget me not," said he to Lady Longbonnet, drawing her aside from the rest of the company, "nor be unmindful of thy promises. Wear this," and he hung round her neck his portrait richly ornamented—"for the sake of thy Narcissus; and should'st thou feel any decay of affection before the period of thy return, gaze on the picture, and be assured the original remains as unaltered as the image!" Saying this, he pressed his lips to her's and strained her to his bosom.

"I shall not forget this day, my dear lord," said her ladyship; "be your truth permanent and changeless as mine, and it will be ever the same." And her ladyship, in her turn, took a miniature of

herself and placed it round the neck of Narcissus, and throwing herself into his arms, resumed, " with the same willingness as I give to thee that miniature, do I now pledge myself to thee, and thee alone for ever !"

" Then I am above all men blest !" returned Narcissus. " Yet, methinks, two years will be a long time to wait.— Cannot we consent to our mutual happiness previous to the expiration of such a long time of patience ? Be as kind to your Narcissus as he will be faithful to you."

What followed this exclamation we know not ; there is a blank in the account handed down to us of this last interview ; in fact, the manuscript from which we have derived our information breaks off at this very interesting passage,

and leaves the imagination of the reader to fill up the hiatus according to his own inclination. Some have conjectured one thing, and some another; but, being all simple conjectures, it is evidently impossible to decide who may be in the right. In our minds, there cannot be a doubt that the termination of the interview was as agreeable to both, and as propitious to the views and wishes of Narcissus as its commencement; as we cannot believe that a female of such tender susceptibility of feeling as Lady Longbonnet would leave her future consort unhappy, if it were in her power to remove his pain by any further pledge of her affection. We do not mean to intimate that any indecent familiarity could be offered or allowed. No; the virtue and the modesty of Narcissus stand on too high ground to be impeached by any accusation of our's against it, even had

we the audacity and the assurance to endeavour to establish a charge of this description.

An indorsement upon the manuscript gives the following statement, and the anticipation which forms the subject of the last chapter.—“The controller, the lord of Brushall and his sons, and the Lady Longbounnet, continued their journey to that part of the ditch where they had determined to cross to their own manors, interrupted only by the loud and reiterated and continued plaudits of the tenantry, through all the farms, and villages, and towns, which lined the way, and which made the royal groupe close their visit with a satisfaction such as they seldom experienced, until the day when they showed their illustrious countenances in the manor of Fever-isle.”

CHAPTER XXVII.

Anticipation.

HAVING now reached the termination of our *Month in Town*, it only remains for the completion of our piece, to look through the glass which fancy holds up to our eye, and anticipate the events of the future. The reader may suppose, that, after the visitors had quitted the castle of Narcissus, he immediately began to turn his thoughts to those objects which were nearest to his

heart, and that he was now anxious to concert measures to rid himself of his plagues—that he would, in due course of time, execute his projects upon Lady Charlotte, dismiss her establishment, take her from her house, and carry her off to Cranmeadow Lodge; but that Orange-graft, finding she was not to be won over to his views and wishes, declined coming into any coercive measures, to the great mortification and disappointment of Narcissus, whose primary object was thus defeated—that Narcissus, accordingly, determined to cut off all intercourse between Germania and Lady Charlotte, in order that, in any future views of his with regard to her establishment in life, the advice of the former might not induce the latter to run restive to his inclinations a second time—that Bull-dog, instead of going away with the rest of the noble guests, remained in the manor,

with a full determination to protect Lady Charlotte, but that Narcissus, by refraining from any hostilities for some time, led Bull-dog to imagine that Lady Charlotte was now perfectly secure, and, under this impression, to leave the manor, and that it was instantly after the departure of the veteran, that Narcissus committed the acts of violence towards his daughter, which Puggilla had advised and Narcissus had long meditated.

Imagination may then paint the joy and satisfaction of the old Lady Puggilla, on having Lady Charlotte brought immediately under her eye, and placed beneath her controul, and may sketch the measures of restraint and rigour which would be adopted towards the object of her ladyship's dislike—confined for the greater part of her time, secluded from all society, except those whom Nar-

cissus had placed round her, and whom he had selected, not for their affection towards her person, but for their attachment to his will in every thing—suffered to ride out at certain hours, and with certain attendants—even her own uncles and all her other dearest friends shut out from intercourse with her—her letters opened and stopped, or allowed to proceed at the will of Lady Puggilla—and, finally, a detachment of soldiers placed round her person, to prevent her from making any successful attempt to escape.

Germania may next rise to view, disconsolate for the loss of her daughter, and vainly imploring still that her innocence may be put to the proof, and she herself restored to the rights and privileges which belong to her situation.—Imagine her, reader, spurned and insult-

ed where she ought to look for affection and legitimate protection; fancy all the charities of nature cold and lifeless towards her: and herself, after the carrying away her child, like a care-worn and withered stem, stripped of all its roses, and gradually perishing beneath the blast of the wintry storm. Depict her then tempted by a splendid offer of Narcissus, to quit the manor, and to return to her native soil; in order to give facilities to his project of an eternal separation; and view her, desolate and forlorn as she is, wrought upon by degrees to accept the glittering offers made to her, in the hope that, although she puts happiness and splendour of rank by this means far away from her for ever, she may at last put an end to the bitterness of persecution, and find at least something like enjoyment in the calm content which she might fairly an-

ticipate amidst the beloved scenes where first she drew her breath.

Narcissus may then be supposed, having ridded himself of the presence of Germania, and allowed some time for her image to fade on the memories of the tenantry (for they were of that description of unstable mortals who would frequently slight or totally despise to-morrow, that which to-day they most adored,) as proceeding to obtain his divorce, preparatory to his union with Lady Longbonnet. On this occasion, it may be natural to believe that, for the sake of consistency, Brownloaf, Broggam, and Turnyou, will inveigh most bitterly against the policy and morality of the measure, arguing that her only fault was that "she had outlived the liking" of her lord, and that this could not, in law nor in reason, be laid down as a

sufficient ground for such a proceeding ; that, in fact, the true motive of Narcissus was to gain some new wife, being himself one of the most fickle of human beings, but that they trusted in God, should the proposed measure be carried into a law, that the fate of Germania would operate as a salutary and permanent beacon to ward off any other poor credulous female who might be in danger of shipwrecking her happiness, by intrusting it to such a treacherous pilot ; and who, deceived by the fictitious glare of a temporary splendour, might foolishly imagine that a diadem was the sure creator of felicity, and that rank and connubial joy were synonyms.

To this Calderagh, Eildown, Blenkinson, and the others of the advisers of Narcissus, will naturally oppose all the rhetorical sophisms which their inge-

nuity can furnish, in order to give a colour of justice, propriety, and policy to the measure; arguing that the welfare of the manor requires that Germania should be sent away, and that Narcissus should seek for a more worthy successor to share his bed and his estate, and that it was not only the interests of the present tenantry which would derive benefit from the change, but the welfare of the next race of vassals might also be increased and consolidated by it, since it was possible that a second marriage might be productive of a son, and every one must allow that a male successor to the estate would be much more desirable than a female, since in the hands of the latter, however amiable she may be, the common rights could not be so secure as when entrusted to more vigorous hands; and that, in fact, the proposed measure was indeed rendered necessary

by the ill conduct of Germania, and the total impossibility of the noble pair ever agreeing to live together again, a separation which, of course, would only tend to throw a discredit upon the lord as well as the manor.

To this perhaps it may be urged by the friends of Germania that as to Narcissus expecting or hoping for issue from a second marriage, it was an expectation the most wild and theoretical that ever entered the human brain. If his advisers could, for a moment, be so ridiculous as to give into this notion, let them just turn their eyes upon him, and look at his form and countenance, stamped with the mark of dissipation, and holding forth nothing but the most determined disappointment to their hopes. It may be supposed that they would disclaim all interference from Germania

on the subject, as it must be rather desirable to her than otherwise, to get freedom from the fetters of a man of so little gallantry, stability, or affection for her, and to seek for the recovery of her peace of mind and happiness in the bosom of another, and in a manor where virtue less frequently creates a destructive enmity.

Some of the brothers of Narcissus may also be expected to step forward on this occasion, to deprecate a measure of so little honour to the family as the separation from a female who had been guilty of no crime ; at least, who was never convicted of offence, although she constantly challenged her enemies to face her with their accusations, and to overwhelm her, if they could “ prove against her honour aught.” They may also be supposed to dwell upon the example which would

thus be to set to the tenants of the manor, who, it was not unnatural to suppose, would in a considerable degree, follow the steps of their lord ; and would urge therefore, for these reasons, that the measure was impolitic in its nature, and injurious in its tendency, and that it ought to be abandoned.

Perhaps it will be replied to this, that no law of God nor nature was ever meant to compel uncongenial persons to dwell and cohabit together. That with respect to the great Author of morality, he could not wish his beings unhappy, and that, therefore, in the eye of reason and religion, the separation of those who could not in cordiality exist with each other, was a measure called for by every consideration which ought to influence honourable minds.

The friends of Narcissus may be supposed to carry the preponderance, and the separation of course finally awarded; and the reader may then speculate as he pleases with regard to the union of Narcissus and Lady Longbonnet, and as to the probability of issue arising to the manor; but, as the latter idea is much more absurd than the former, we would advise him to leave it entirely out of his calculation.

The grand preparations in the parks of Narcissus may be supposed, in due course of time, to draw near to a completion; and that after the promise that they should be thrown open for the gratification of the tenantry, Narcissus, like other proprietors of shows and exhibitions, will demand a fee from those who wish for accommodation to see all the splendid performances on the

occasion. For some time previous to the perfection of the business, it may be premised, that Narcissus and all his advisers, turning their backs entirely upon the manor, may be occupied in cutting and carving, scraping, boring, and rigging walnut-shells for the purpose of making a mock fight in an artificial river, and that by dint of ingenuity and hard labour, they may get together a pigmy squadron, to see the evolutions of which tens of thousands of the tenantry will assemble from all parts of the manor. It may be expected, (as great expectations frequently incur disappointment) that a great portion of the vassals, after waiting and crowding about through the whole day, and seeing every thing which is to be displayed, will go home discontented with having lost so much time in following and staring at mere mummery; and will very

probably find fault with the showman for thus picking the pockets of the tenantry, and wasting the public money upon such idle and unsatisfactory affairs, instead of turning it to the use and benefit of the manor, which they will declare has need enough of it, and indeed, the soil of which is wasted away and perishing for want of an adequate supply of manure.

It may be imagined that tens of thousands of fireworks are exhibited on this occasion, and that every thing which extravagant art can invent, will be brought forward to put the vassals in good humour; because the opponents of the friends of Narcissus will have taken such pains to depreciate the business altogether; and the latter will, therefore, strain every exertion to gain over to their side the majority of the vas-

sals by the splendour, instead of the propriety and wisdom of the exhibitions. The trees of the park will exhibit brilliant illuminations, and the issue of the fête will be an universal diffusion of drunkenness and all other kinds of vice; insomuch that hundreds, perchance, will ever have to rue the day, when they shall contemplate the mischiefs which thus may have resulted from it, both as they refer to public morals and to private happiness.

The reader may next survey the return of things to their old train, and imagine Narcissus, in the midst of his advisers, taking measures for his own gratification, but setting entirely out of sight all the best interests of the manor. Such females as Ladies Jerry and Heartshallow will be encouraged at the castle while the female tenantry who have the

charms of virtue to recommend them to notice, will be neglected and discouraged, and, if not exposed to absolute persecution, will at least be treated with that indignity which ought only to attach to vice and depravity. Vice may consequently be expected to become the object of universal pursuit; and may spread itself gradually from one end of the manor to the other, until virtue shall cease to be known, except by name.—Debaucheries and drunkenness may become the daily habits of the most illustrious individuals in the manor, who will begin to consider such practices as ornamental to, rather than derogatory from the dignity of human beings.

This moral decay, perhaps, may be the forerunner of political degradation, and as men will give way to private vices, and set all virtue at open defiance

in their pursuit of pleasure, the interests of the manor may be entirely neglected ; there may scarcely be left hands which will condescend to till and to sow the land, and to perform other offices of good tenants ; and, in this spread of indolence and apathy, the lord of some neighbouring manor may, perchance, form the scheme of annexing Fever-isle to his own demesne, and may, consequently, make an attack on its vassals with a view to its subjugation. The tenantry may then, probably, be suddenly roused to the true nature of their situation, and the full dangers which beset them, and may, either by a sudden stroke of energy overthrow their invaders, or be only enabled to save themselves by very considerable sacrifices, and a long and sanguinary conflict, which will deluge their own lands with their own blood.

Imagination may then take its last flight, and picture in the due course of nature, Narcissus descending to his fathers, and to use the cant phrase of those who write the praises of lords of manors, "exchange his earthly rule for a heavenly diadem." It may be imagined that, on this most melancholy event, the tenantry will give themselves up to all the wildest excesses of despair ; that those who usually follow business will now desert the means by which they gained subsistence, and only think of weeping and wailing, and that sighing and wretchedness and tears will be heard and seen from one corner of the manor to the other. It may be feared that many, in the moment of unconquerable despair for the loss of so good a lord, will lay violent hands upon themselves, in order that they may form his retinue to the other world, that it may

be recorded of them, that they died for their lord and on the same day ; and amongst the number of these devotees, it may be fair to suppose that Calde-
ragh, Eildown, Blenkinson, and about a score of other most unalterable friends of Narcissus seeing no continuance of honors for them will look at the good places and splendid apartments of the castle, and say, “ this is no abiding place for us ; therefore let us be gone ! ” And the loss of these great and good men will make the loss of Narcissus still more to be regretted, since the devastation which would thus be occasioned, must be irreparable.

After these things may have taken place, and the grief of the vassals may have had a due portion of time to subside, it may reasonably be expected that Lady Charlotte will be called to take

possession of the manor, which she may have to do under peculiar distressing circumstances, seeing that the manor will be so completely impoverished that there will scarcely be an acre of soil left in it which is not reduced to barrenness. It may be supposed that her ladyship will then pick out the wisest and best of the tenantry, and call them to reside in the castle, that they may assist her with their advice on all occasions of emergency ; and by this salutary measure the hopes of the tenants will be revived, and Despair will once more begin to retrace her steps to the other side of the broad ditch. It is then to be hoped that the talents and integrity of these advisers of Lady Charlotte will be evident in the restoration of the land, the extinction of those jealousies and discontents which had for so many years torn and divided the vassals, and in the

establishment of a system of happiness and concord and unanimity which will promise permanency and the most extensive good effects, to the extreme mortification of Lady Puggilla, who, to all human appearance, will never die.

THE END.

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